

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

GUZ 55

2Timothy

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV - LV*

David Guzik

David Guziks' Commentary On
55 2Timothy
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Greeting

2Ti 1:1 Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,
2Ti 1:2 to my beloved child Timothy: Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

2Ti 1:3 I have thanks to God, whom I worship from my forebears in a pure conscience, how unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,

2Ti 1:4 longing to see you, being reminded of your tears, that I may be filled with joy,

2Ti 1:5 taking recollection of the unpretended faith in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am assured that it is also in you.

2Ti 1:6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

2Ti 1:7 For God did not give a spirit of cowardice to us, but of power and of love, and of self-control.

2Ti 1:8 Then do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner. But suffer hardship with the gospel, according to the power of God,

2Ti 1:9 He having saved us and having called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times,

2Ti 1:10 but now revealed through the appearance of our Savior, Jesus Christ, making death of no effect, bringing life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel,

2Ti 1:11 for which I was appointed a herald and apostle and a teacher of nations.

2Ti 1:12 For which cause I also suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit until that Day.

2Ti 1:13 Hold a pattern of sound words which you heard from me, in faith and love in Christ Jesus.

2Ti 1:14 Guard the good Deposit given through the Holy Spirit indwelling in us.

2Ti 1:15 You know this, that all those in Asia turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

2Ti 1:16 May the Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me, and he was not ashamed of my chain,

2Ti 1:17 but having come to Rome, he more diligently sought and found me .

2Ti 1:18 May the Lord give to him to find mercy from the Lord in that Day. And what things he served in Ephesus, you know very well.

2 Timothy 1:1-18

2 Timothy 1 – A Spirit of Boldness

A. Greeting and introduction.

1. (1) A letter from Paul.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.

a. **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God:** Paul's introduction here is like his other letters, with an immediate declaration that he is an **apostle** according to **the will of God**, not according to his own ambition or man's choice.

i. Paul had a role to play in God's plan for reaching the world for Jesus Christ, and his role was **apostle** – being a unique ambassador from God to the world. Everyone has their own role to play, and we must each fulfill it **by the will of God**.

b. **According to the promise of life:** This statement is unique compared to greetings in Paul's other letters. It was appropriate here because Paul was imprisoned again in Rome and he expected to be executed (2Ti 4:6). Therefore, this **promise of life** was especially precious to him.

i. The Bible doesn't tell us the details, but it seems that after Paul was released from the Roman imprisonment mentioned at the end of the book of Acts, he enjoyed a few more years of liberty until he was re-arrested and imprisoned in Rome again.

ii. One can go to Rome today and see the place where they say Paul was imprisoned. It is really just a cold dungeon, a cave in the ground, with bare walls and a little hole in the ceiling where food was dropped down. There were no windows; it was just a cold, little cell that would have been especially uncomfortable in winter.

iii. Paul wrote this letter from his second Roman imprisonment, and soon after he wrote this letter he was condemned and executed in Rome at the command of Nero. Paul sensed this; therefore 2 Timothy is not only the last letter we have from Paul, there is also a note of urgency and passion we might

expect from a man who knew he would soon be executed.

2. (2-5) *A greeting and a happy remembrance.*

To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

a. **To Timothy, a beloved son:** Paul thought much about his spiritual family – about **Timothy, a beloved son**; and about his true **forefathers**, those Jews before Paul's time that genuinely followed God with a pure heart, not in the self-righteousness of the Pharisees.

b. **Grace, mercy, and peace:** Spurgeon used this verse, along with 1Ti 1:2 and Tit 1:4 to show that ministers need more **mercy** than others do. After all, in the beginning to his letters to churches in general, Paul only wrote *grace* and *peace* in his greeting (Rom 1:7, 1Co 1:3, 2Co 1:2, Gal 1:3, Eph 1:2, Php 1:2, Col 1:2, 1Th 1:1, 2Th 1:2). But when he wrote to the pastors – Timothy and Titus – he was compelled to greet them with **grace, mercy, and peace**.

i. "Did you ever notice this one thing about Christian ministers, that they need even more mercy than other people? Although everybody needs mercy, ministers need it more than anybody else; and so we do, for if we are not faithful, we shall be greater sinners even than our hearers, and it needs much grace for us always to be faithful, and much mercy

will be required to cover our shortcomings. So I shall take those three things to myself: 'Grace, mercy, and peace.' You may have the two, 'Grace and peace,' but I need mercy more than any of you; so I take it from my Lord's loving hand, and I will trust, and not be afraid, despite all my shortcomings, and feebleness, and blunders, and mistakes, in the course of my whole ministry." (Spurgeon)

c. **Without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day:** Timothy was on Paul's prayer list. Paul made it a regular practice to pray with a list and to at least mention in prayer those who were precious to him.

i. **Prayers night and day** also shows how much Paul prayed: Whenever it was **night** or whenever it was **day**. Of course, one might say this was easy for Paul, since he was in prison; but such prayer is never easy.

ii. Paul is to be admired for wanting to do the most for Jesus that he could wherever he was. If he could not preach, then he would pray.

d. **Mindful of your tears:** Perhaps the **tears** Paul remembered were the tears Timothy shed at their last parting.

e. **Filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you:** It made Paul genuinely happy (**filled with joy**) to remember the faith of faithful men like Timothy, who loved and served Jesus and His people.

f. **Which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice:** Timothy's **genuine faith** was due, in no small measure, to his godly upbringing and the influence of his grandmother and mother.

i. Timothy and his family came from the ancient city of Lystra, where Paul visited on his first missionary

journey (Act 14:16-20). When Paul and Barnabas were there, God used Paul to miraculously heal a crippled man – and the people of the city began to praise Paul and Barnabas as Greek gods from Olympus, even starting to sacrifice a bull to them. Paul barely restrained them from doing so, and soon enemies of the gospel had turned the crowd against the missionary evangelists, so they cast Paul out of the city and stoned him. Yet God miraculously preserved Paul's life, and he carried on.

ii. On Paul's second missionary journey, he came again to Lystra – and there met a young man who had come to Jesus and was devoted to serving the Lord (Act 16:1-5). This young man was Timothy, and he is described as having a mother *who believed, but his father was Greek*.

iii. So, Timothy's mother and grandmother were believers, but his father was not (at least not at first). In the Roman world, fathers had absolute authority over the family, and since Timothy's father was not a Christian, his home situation was less than ideal (though not necessarily terrible). But his mother and grandmother either led him to Jesus or grounded him in the faith. God wants to use parents and grandparents to pass on an eternal legacy to their children and grandchildren.

iv. When Paul left Lystra, he took Timothy with him (Act 16:3-4). This began a mentor-learner relationship that touched the whole world.

g. **I am persuaded is in you also:** It wasn't enough that this **genuine faith** was in Timothy's grandmother and mother; it had to be in Timothy **also**. Our children, once of age to be accountable before God, must have

their *own* relationship with Jesus Christ. Mom and dad's relationship with God will not then bring eternal life.

- i. The phrase **genuine faith** could be literally translated, *unhypocritical faith* – that is, faith that is not an act. It was for real, not just in appearance. This is a significant theme of the Book of James.

B. Paul exhorts Timothy to be bold.

1. (6) *Stir up the gift of God which is in you.*

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

- a. **Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God:** Timothy was a gifted, valuable man for the kingdom of God; but he seems to have had a timid streak in him. For this reason, Paul often encouraged him to be strong and bold.

- i. It may be that Timothy was somewhat timid, but it is also true that he had large and heavy responsibility as the overseer of God's work in Ephesus and the larger area. There were many Christians in many congregations meeting over a whole region (Act 19:9-10; Act 19:17-20). Perhaps Timothy was a man of normal courage who had enormous responsibility.

- ii. If it was true that Timothy was the kind of man who avoided confrontation, it was good that he saw Paul's example. Paul was a man of deep love, but also a man who never shied away from confrontation. A significant example was when he publicly rebuked the Apostle Peter (Gal 2:11-21). Timothy already *had* a shepherd's tender heart for the sheep; Paul wanted to develop within him the boldness necessary to really lead and protect the flock.

iii. In 1 and 2 Timothy there are no less than 25 different places where Paul encouraged Timothy to be bold, to not shy away from confrontation, to stand up where he needs to stand up and be strong. Because of who Timothy was and the responsibilities he had to bear, this was what Timothy needed to hear.

b. **Therefore I remind you:** People are at all different places. For some, the last thing they need to hear is, "You need to be bolder" because that is not their problem. Many others come from the place where they need to hear, "**Stir up the gift of God which is in you**; be bold, get going, go for it." Timothy was of this second type.

i. Some who *appear* bold really are just good at pretending. They use a confrontational, in-your-face attitude to mask a lot of pain and insecurity. They need to become really bold and secure *in the Lord*, instead of pretending and hiding behind a mask of false courage.

c. **Stir up the gift of God which is in you:** Timothy could not be passive and just let it all happen; he needed to be bold and to **stir up the gift of God which is in you**. Some have gifts given to them by God, but those gifts are neglected. They need to be stirred up and put into action.

i. This reminds us that God does not work His gifts through us as if we were robots. Even when He gives a man or a woman gifts, He leaves an element that needs the cooperation of their will, of their desire and drive, to fulfill the purpose of His gifts.

ii. Some are waiting passively for God to use them; but God is waiting for them to stir up the gifts that are within them. Some are waiting for some dramatic

new anointing from God, and God is waiting for them to stir up what He has already given.

d. **Stir up:** This has the idea of stirring up a fire to keep it burning bright and strong; a fire left to itself will always burn out, but God wants us to keep our gifts burning strong for Him.

i. "The Greek *anazopureo* (*stir up*) means either 'to kindle afresh' or 'to keep in full flame'. There is no necessary suggestion, therefore, that Timothy had lost his early fire, although undoubtedly, like every Christian, he needed an incentive to keep the fire burning at full flame." (Guthrie)

e. **Which is in you through the laying on of my hands:** God used the **laying on of hands** to communicate spiritual gifts to Timothy. This is not the only way God gives gifts, but it is a common way – and a way that we should never neglect. It is a good thing to have others pray for us and as that God would give us gifts that might be used to bless and build up the family of God.

i. "We have no right to assume that hands were laid on Timothy once only. Thus Acts ix. 17 and xiii. 3 are two such occasions in St. Paul's spiritual life. There may have been others." (White)

2. (7) *Why Timothy can be bold in using the gifts God has given him: God has given him a spirit of **power and of love and of a sound mind**.*

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

a. **God has not given us a spirit of fear:** Paul saw the timidity that was in Timothy; Timothy knew the fear he sometimes felt. God wanted Timothy to know that this

fear wasn't from the God he served; he needed to know that **God has not given us a spirit of fear.**

i. We all face situations where we feel timid and afraid. For some, speaking in front of others makes them fear; others are afraid of confrontation, others of being made to look foolish, others are afraid of rejection. We all deal with fear.

ii. The first step in dealing with such fears is to understand that they are *not* from God. It is a significant step to say, "This isn't God making me feel like this; God hasn't given me this." Perhaps it is from personality, perhaps a weakness of the flesh, perhaps a demonic attack – but it isn't from God.

b. But of power and of love and of a sound mind:

The second step in dealing with such fears is understanding what God *has* given us: a spirit of **power and of love and of a sound mind.**

i. God has given us a spirit of **power**: When we do His work, proclaim His word, represent His kingdom, we have all His power supporting us. We are safe in His hands.

ii. God has given us a spirit of **love**: This tells us a lot about the **power** He has given us. Many think of **power** in terms of how much we can control others; but Jesus' power is expressed in how much we can love and serve others. On the night before the cross, *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands* – and what did He do with all that power? He humbly washed His disciples' feet (Joh 13:1-11).

iii. God has given us a **sound mind**: The ancient Greek word here had the idea of a calm, self-

controlled mind, in contrast to the panic and confusion that comes in a fearful situation.

c. Not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love: We don't need to accept what God has **not** given us (**a spirit of fear**), and we do need to humbly receive and walk in what He *has* given us (**a spirit... of power and of love and of a sound mind**).

i. Paul wrote this to Timothy because boldness matters; without it, we can't fulfill God's purpose for our lives. God's purpose for is more than making money, being entertained, and being comfortable; it is for each of us to use the gifts He gives to touch His people and help a needy world.

ii. Fear and timidity will keep us from using the gifts God gives. God wants us each to take His power, His love, and His calm thinking and overcome fear, to be used of Him with all the gifts He gives.

3. (8) Using the boldness God gives, don't be ashamed of the imprisoned apostle.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.

a. **Therefore:** Paul has just told Timothy about the spirit of power, love, and a sound mind, with courage, that is the birthright of every believer in Jesus Christ. Now he told Timothy *how* to let what God gave him guide his thinking.

b. **Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord:** If Timothy took the courage God gave, he would not be **ashamed of the testimony of our Lord**. We often fail to understand that it wasn't easy to follow a *crucified* Master.

i. Today, we have sanitized Jesus and disinfected the cross, making it all safe. But in the day Paul wrote this, it would seem strange indeed to follow a crucified man and call him savior.

ii. Think of Jesus' teaching; if you want to be great, be the servant of all; be like a child, like a slave, like the younger, like the last instead of the first. This is a testimony some would be **ashamed** of.

iii. Paul knew that the plan of God in Jesus Christ seemed foolish to many; but he also knew it was the living, active, power of God to save souls and transform lives. Paul would not be **ashamed** of it, and neither should Timothy – or us today.

c. **Nor of me His prisoner:** If Timothy took the courage God gave, he would not be ashamed of Paul the **prisoner**. It wasn't easy to support an *imprisoned* apostle.

i. Note that Paul considered himself a prisoner of *Jesus* (**nor of me His prisoner**). Paul saw himself not as the prisoner of Rome, but as a prisoner of God. Paul saw God as the Lord of every circumstance, and if he was free, he was the Lord's free man; if he were imprisoned, he was the Lord's prisoner.

d. **But share with me:** It wasn't enough that Paul told Timothy to not be ashamed of him and his chains; he also invited Timothy to **share** in all of it.

i. We **share... in the sufferings** in the same way Paul spoke of in Rom 12:15 : *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep*. We identify with our suffering brethren across the world through prayer, through a heart of concern, and through wise action.

e. **According to the power of God:** Paul actually suffered **according to the power of God**. The power of God is always there, but it is not always there to *remove* the difficulty. Sometimes it is there to see us *through* the difficulty.

i. In one sense, it was strange for Paul the prisoner to write about the power of God – the power of Rome in some ways seemed a lot more real. But God's power has been vindicated by history; the Roman Empire is gone, but the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul lived to preach lives on.

4. (9-10) *The message Timothy is not to be ashamed of: God's plan of salvation.*

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

a. **Who has saved us and called us:** We come to God as a response to His call in our lives. We did not initiate the search; we do not find God, He finds us; so we must respond to His call when we sense it.

b. **Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose:** This explains *why* God called us. It wasn't anything great we were, or anything great we had done, but because it fit in with His purpose – because He wanted to.

c. **Grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began:** God directed His gracious work towards us when we only existed as a fact in God's

knowledge. Just as a couple lovingly plans for a baby before the baby is born, so God planned for us.

i. **Before time began** reminds us that **time** is something God created to give order and arrangement to our present world; time is not essential to God's existence. He existed before time was created and will remain when time ends, and we live on in eternity with Him.

d. **But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ:** The appearing of Jesus revealed the purpose and grace of God. Jesus fulfilled the eternal plan of God; Jesus truly shows us what God and His plan are all about. That's why we can never know Jesus too much.

e. **Who abolished death:** Because of the appearing of Jesus, death isn't death anymore. In regard to believers, it is called **sleep** – not because we are unconscious, but because it is pleasant and peaceful. Death does not *take* anything from the Christian; it graduates them to glory.

i. Someone suggested that the Christian has no place for the letters "RIP" on his tombstone because "Rest in Peace" does not adequately describe our eternal fate. They suggested instead the letters "CAD," signifying "Christ Abolished Death."

f. **And brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:** Because of the appearing of Jesus, we know more about **life and immortality** than before. The understanding of the after-life was murky at best in the Old Testament; but Jesus let us know more about heaven – and hell – than anyone else could.

i. Jesus brought the truth about our immortal state to life through His own resurrection; He showed us what our own immortal bodies would be like and assured us

that we would in fact have them. Jesus is therefore a more reliable spokesman regarding the world beyond than anyone who has a near-death experience.

g. **Through the gospel:** The good news of who Jesus is and what He did for us can be thought of as links connected together in a beautiful chain of God's work.

- God's plan of salvation began for us in eternity past, **before time began.**
- It continued with the **appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.**
- It came to us when He **saved us and called us.**
- It continues as we live our **holy calling.**
- It will one day show itself in **immortality** – eternal life.
 - i. When we consider the greatness of this message, it is no wonder Paul called it **the gospel** – *good news*. It is good news that God thought of you and loved you before you even existed; good news that Jesus came to perfectly show us God, good news that He called us and saved us, good news that He gives us a holy calling, and good news that He shows us and gives us eternal life.
 - ii. This message was worth prison to the Apostle Paul.

5. (11-12) Paul's appointed work, and the confidence it gave to him.

To which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

a. **To which I was appointed a preacher:** We can almost sense Paul growing in strength as he penned these words; he understood again that it was a *privilege* to suffer for such a great gospel – so far from being **ashamed**, he was honored.

i. Flashing through his mind were the sermons he preached (**a preacher**), the churches he founded and led (**an apostle**), and the diverse nations he brought to Jesus Christ (**a teacher of the Gentiles**). He no doubt thanked Jesus as he considered each one.

b. **For this reason I also suffer these things:** Paul knew that though he preached a wonderful message, it cost him dearly along the way. His present suffering in prison was because of this heavenly appointment.

c. **For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded:** This explains why Paul was so bold in his work, and how he could feel honored by circumstances that might make others feel ashamed. He said that it was because **I know whom I have believed**. Paul knew the God he trusted and served.

i. We must know *what* we believe; but it is even more important to know **whom** we believe. When we know how great God is; when God and His glory becomes the great fact of our lives, then we have real boldness.

ii. “‘Know thyself,’ said the heathen philosopher; that is well, but that knowledge may only lead a man to hell. ‘Know Christ,’ says the Christian philosopher, ‘know him, and then you shall know yourself,’ and this shall certainly lead you to heaven, for the knowledge of Christ Jesus is saving knowledge.” (Spurgeon)

d. **And am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him:** This is a second reason that explains Paul's boldness. Paul gave Jesus his life, and knew Jesus was fully able to keep it!

i. What was it that Paul **committed to Him**? Surely, he first had in mind *his life*. Paul knew he could not keep his own life; he knew that only God could keep it. God was able; Paul was not. Knowing this made Paul full of boldness, but it wasn't boldness in self, but in God.

ii. But it wasn't *only* his life that Paul had **committed** to God. Paul had committed everything to Jesus – his life, his body, his character and reputation, his life's work, everything that was precious.

e. **Until that Day:** Paul had in mind either the **Day** he would see Jesus or the **Day** Jesus came for Paul. Paul and Timothy both lived in such awareness of **that Day** that Paul didn't need to identify it more than that.

i. **That Day** was precious to Paul because he had committed everything to Jesus. To the degree we commit our life and all we are and have to Jesus, to that same degree **that Day** will be precious to us.

C. Paul exhorts Timothy to remain faithful to the truth.

1. (13-14) Faithfulness matters, so hold fast the truth.

Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

a. **Hold fast the pattern of sound words:** After writing of the importance of boldness, Paul next called Timothy (and all godly ministers) to be faithful to God's truth, **the pattern of sound words**.

i. **Hold fast** suggests someone or something would try to take the truth from Timothy. Unless he held on in faithfulness, it would be snatched from him.

ii. It takes a special man or woman to truly **hold fast**; it takes someone who is not *tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men* (Eph 4:14).

iii. This is an important measure for any pastor; he must **hold fast the pattern of sound words**. The primary measure should not be humor or excitement or personality or charisma or even evangelistic interest. Some who claim an evangelistic heart let go of **the pattern of sound words** and show themselves to unfaithful to their Lord and their calling.

b. **The pattern of sound words**: This suggests that true teaching, according to God's truth, has a certain *pattern* – a **pattern** that can be detected by the discerning heart.

c. **Which you have heard from me**: The sound words Timothy was to hold fast came to him from a man – Paul the apostle. God used human instruments to communicate His eternal truth.

i. We must always beware of the person who rejects all human teachers and says, "It's just me and my Bible." God used Paul to communicate **the pattern of sound words**, and Timothy was expected to be faithful to that pattern. God uses other men and women to communicate that same truth today.

d. **In faith and love which are in Christ Jesus**: Timothy's faithfulness has to be tempered with **faith and love which are in Christ Jesus**. Some people take

God's word and consider it only an intellectual matter, and leave out **faith and love**.

i. **Faith and love** describe how the truth is to be held. We hold it in **faith**, truly believing it and putting our lives on it; and we hold it in **love**, not in proud arrogance or self-seeking superiority.

ii. If one thinks they are faithful to the truth, but do not show **faith** and **love** in the life, they may be nothing more than a Pharisee. They were a group in Jesus' day that was very committed to holding certain teachings, but had no fruit of **faith** and **love** evident in their lives.

e. **That good thing which was committed to you:** Timothy had something **committed** to him – Paul called it **that good thing**, no doubt meaning the gospel and the truth of God. Timothy needed *faithfulness* to **keep** that good thing.

i. God has committed many good things to us; we must be faithful to **keep** them. **Keep** has more than just the idea of holding on to something; it also means to guard it and to use it wisely. God has given us His Word, family relationships, time, talents, resources, education, and so on. We must be faithful to keep those good things in a way that brings glory and credit to Jesus.

ii. We live in a time where faithfulness is only expected so long as it serves our own interests. When it stops being in our immediate advantage to be faithful, many people feel just fine about giving up their responsibility. But this is not honoring to God.

iii. Being faithful to God means having the heart that will to what is right even when it seems not in our advantage to do so. *But he honors those who fear the*

LORD; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change (Psa 15:4). True faithfulness is shown when it costs something to be faithful.

iv. God is faithful with what we commit to Him (2Ti 1:12). Will we be faithful with what He has committed to us?

f. **Keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us:** This is the key to faithfulness. God requires a faithfulness from us that is greater than we can fulfill by our own resources. Unless we walk in the Spirit and are filled with the Holy Spirit, we cannot keep faithful to what we must keep faithful to.

2. (15) An example of unfaithful men.

This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

a. **All those in Asia had turned away from me:** The great apostle Paul, at the end of his days and a fantastic missionary career, was almost all alone. He was not praised by the world, or even regarded much among other Christians.

i. If there were Christian radio back then, no one would want to interview Paul. If there were Christian magazines back then, Paul would not have been on the cover. Paul would have had a hard time finding a publisher for the books he had written. For many Christians of that day, Paul seemed too extreme, too committed, not flashy or famous enough. Even the Christians of **Asia** – where Paul did a great work (Acts 19) – **turned away** from Paul.

ii. Geographically, **Asia** in the New Testament doesn't mean the Far Eastern continent as it does today. It

means the Roman province of Asia, which today would mostly be Turkey.

b. **Phygellus and Hermogenes**: These were two notable men who among those **turned away** from Paul, were not faithful, and did not *hold fast*.

i. These two were not the only ones, but Paul found it necessary to point out **Phygellus and Hermogenes** particularly: "He names two of the deserters – probably the best known – in order to put a stop to these slanderous attacks. For it usually happens that deserters from the Christian warfare seek to excuse their own disgraceful conduct by inventing whatever accusations they can against faithful and upright ministers of the gospel" (Calvin).

ii. We don't know much about **Phygellus and Hermogenes**; this is the only place they are mentioned in the Bible. It's a terrible thing to have your name recorded in God's word as an example of unfaithfulness.

3. (16-18) *An example of a faithful man.*

The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day – and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

a. **The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus**: **Onesiphorus** was a different sort of man than Phygellus and Hermogenes; he was faithful to Paul in difficult circumstances. Paul therefore prayed for **mercy** on Onesiphorus and his whole household.

i. We don't know much about Onesiphorus, other than that he lived near Timothy, because at the end of the letter Paul asked Timothy to greet Onesiphorus' household.

b. **Onesiphorus**: Paul described many things that made him special.

i. **He often refreshed me**: He was an intentional blessing to Paul, and worked to refresh the apostle who did so much for other people.

ii. **Was not ashamed of my chain**: Onesiphorus showed himself to be a true friend of Paul when the apostle was imprisoned.

iii. **He sought me out very zealously and found me**: There were many prisons in Rome, so it was probably difficult for Onesiphorus to find Paul, but he did.

c. **That he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day**: This was a special prayer for Onesiphorus. If a faithful servant like Onesiphorus needed such a prayer, then all the more do the rest of us.

d. **You know very well**: Apparently, Onesiphorus' service was so faithful, so outstanding, that it was famous – Paul could simply tell Timothy, "**You know very well**" how well he served.

i. Onesiphorus lived up to the meaning of his name, which means "help-bringer."

A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

2Ti 2:1 Then my child, you be empowered by grace in Christ Jesus.

2Ti 2:2 And what things you heard from me through many witnesses, commit these things to faithful men, such as will be competent also to teach others.

2Ti 2:3 Then you suffer hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2Ti 2:4 No one serving as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of this life, so that he might please the one enlisting him .

2Ti 2:5 And also if anyone competes, he is not crowned unless he competes lawfully.

2Ti 2:6 It is right the laboring farmer to partake first of the fruits.

2Ti 2:7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

2Ti 2:8 Remember Jesus Christ, having been raised from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel,

2Ti 2:9 in which I suffer ill as an evildoer, unto bonds; but the Word of God has not been bound.

2Ti 2:10 Because of this, I endure all things on account of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus, with everlasting glory.

2Ti 2:11 Faithful is the Word: for if we died with Him , we also shall live with Him ;

2Ti 2:12 if we endure, we shall also reign with Him ; if we deny Him , that One will deny us;

2Ti 2:13 if we are unfaithful, that One remains faithful; He is not able to deny Himself.

A Worker Approved by God

2Ti 2:14 Remind them of these things, solemnly testifying before the Lord not to dispute about words for nothing useful, to the throwing down of those hearing.

2Ti 2:15 Earnestly study to present yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

2Ti 2:16 But shun profane, empty babblings, for they will go on to more ungodliness,

2Ti 2:17 and their word will have growth like gangrene, of whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

2Ti 2:18 who missed the mark concerning the truth, saying the resurrection already has come, and overturn the faith of some.

2Ti 2:19 However, the foundation of God stands firm, having this seal, " The Lord knew those being His;" Num. 16:5 , also, Let everyone naming the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness.

2Ti 2:20 But in a great house not only are there vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

2Ti 2:21 Then if anyone purifies himself from these, he will be a vessel to honor, having been sanctified and made useful to the Master, having been prepared to every good work.

2Ti 2:22 But flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with the ones calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

2Ti 2:23 But refuse the foolish and uninstructed questionings, knowing that they generate quarrels.

2Ti 2:24 But a slave of the Lord ought not to quarrel, but to be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing,

2Ti 2:25 in meekness teaching those who have opposed, if perhaps God may give them repentance for a full knowledge of the truth,

2Ti 2:26 and they may awake out of the snare of the Devil, having been taken captive by him, so as to do the will of that one.

2 Timothy 2:1-26

2 Timothy 2 – Advice to a Young Pastor

A. Working hard for a faithful God.

1. (1) *Be strong in grace.*

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

a. **Be strong:** This was an important encouragement. Paul knew that Timothy would need strength and endurance to fulfill the calling God gave him.

i. Again, this is one of the twenty-five times Paul encouraged Timothy to be strong and endure in his work in Ephesus. Perhaps Timothy was naturally timid and easily discouraged, or perhaps he was a man of normal courage who had great responsibilities. He needed to be told often, “**be strong.**”

b. **Be strong:** God is always there to give us strength; *He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might, He increases strength... those that wait on the LORD shall renew their strength (Isa 40:29; Isa 40:31).* However, we must *receive* this strength, therefore Paul had to encourage Timothy to **be strong**.

i. God makes the resource of His strength available to us (Eph 6:10-11). Yet it does not come as we sit back passively and suppose that God will simply pour it into us. He brings His strength to us as we seek Him and rely on Him instead of our own strength.

c. **Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus:** Paul told Timothy a *specific way to be strong* – that is, to be **strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus**. This strength in **grace** is essential for a strong Christian life.

i. “*Grace* here has its simplest theological meaning, as the divine help, the unmerited gift of assistance that comes from God” (White). Resting in the **grace** – the *unmerited favor of God towards us that is in Christ Jesus* – gives a confidence and boldness we could

never have when thinking we are on probation or thinking God hasn't made up His mind about us yet.

ii. There is nothing that can makes us as strong as saying, "I am a child of God in Jesus Christ" and "I have the love and favor of God even though I don't deserve it." That is the strength that comes by grace.

iii. Paul knew what it was like to receive the strength of God's grace, as he explained in 2Co 12:9-10 : *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* He could encourage Timothy like this from his own life experience.

2. (2) Spread the word among faithful men.

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

a. **The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses:** Paul reminded Timothy of the body of truth that he had heard from the Apostle in the presence of many others. Certainly, Timothy heard many Bible studies from Paul, and shared much time with the Apostle in personal discipleship.

i. It may be that Paul reminded Timothy of a special message he presented at Timothy's ordination service **among many witnesses**. "But he seems to refer here to the doctrines delivered to him when, in the *presence of many witnesses*, he laid his hands upon him; see 1Ti 6:12. Then the apostle gave him the proper form of sound words which he was to teach; and now he tells him to commit those truths to

faithful men in the say way that they were committed to him” (Clarke).

b. **Commit these to faithful men:** God gave ministry to Timothy, not for him to keep to himself, but for him to pass on to others. An essential part of his work as a pastor was to pour into others what God had committed to him.

i. One may say that everything that a pastor does in his ministry he should train others to do. There are no duties of a pastor so holy or so secret that he should keep them all to himself. He should always seek to spread ministry about to others, and to train others to do the work of the ministry.

ii. Timothy was not to teach others his own particular ideas or theories, but simple apostolic doctrine and example (**the things that you have heard from me**). What Paul poured into him he was responsible to pour into others.

iii. The job of training leaders is simply part of a pastor’s job description. He should not only train leaders when the need for a leader is obvious; nor should he only train leaders for the needs of his congregation alone. He should train leaders for the Kingdom of God in general, whether they are used in ministry at the particular pastor’s congregation or not.

c. **To faithful men:** When Timothy looked for those whom he could pour apostolic doctrine and practice into, he was to look for the quality of *faithfulness*. He didn’t need to find smart men, popular men, strong men, easy men, perfect men, or good-looking men; Paul told him to look for **faithful men**.

i. Through the history of Christianity, some have held to the idea of *apostolic succession*. This is the idea that you can know who a true minister of the gospel is because Peter ordained someone to succeed him, and that one ordained someone to succeed him, and the next one ordained someone to succeed him, so forth and so on down the line. However, this verse reveals the real apostolic succession – the succession of **faithful men**, who take the teachings of the apostles and pass them on.

ii. Without faithfulness to the teaching and example of the apostles, the idea of apostolic succession is nothing more than the laying of empty hands upon empty heads. “Where is the *uninterrupted* apostolic succession? Who can tell? Probably it does not exist on the face of the world. All the pretensions to it by certain Churches are as stupid as they are idle and futile” (Clarke).

d. **Who will be able to teach others also**: This job of training leaders was so important that it could not be restricted to Timothy alone. Those whom he had trained must also be given the job to **teach others also**.

i. **Will be able** “Expresses capability as proved by experience” (White).

3. (3-4) *Persevere for God with a soldier’s attitude.*

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

a. **You therefore must**: This was not a suggestion from Paul to Timothy; **must** carries the sense of a requirement or a command. There was something that Timothy had to do, and Paul would tell him to do it.

b. Endure hardship as a good soldier: Timothy **must** take the attitude of soldier who *expects* to **endure hardship** for their cause. No real soldier – or at least no good soldier – ever gave up simply because some hardship came to them.

i. In the same way, if a believer is not willing to endure hardship, they will never accomplish much for Jesus Christ. They will give up as soon as something hard is required of them; they cannot fulfill Jesus' call: *If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.* (Mat 16:24)

ii. "Never dream of delicacy; think not to find God in the gardens of Egypt, whom Moses found not but in the burning-bush." (Trapp)

iii. "Paul does not exhort Timothy to be a common, or ordinary soldier, but to be a 'good soldier of Jesus Christ;' for all soldiers, and all true soldiers, may not be good soldiers. There are men who are but just soldiers and nothing more; they only need sufficient temptation and they readily become cowardly, idle, useless and worthless; but he is the good soldier who is bravest of the brave, courageous at all times, who is zealous, does his duty with heart and earnestness." (Spurgeon)

c. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life: Timothy must take the attitude of a soldier, who willingly separates himself from the things of civilian life.

i. A soldier has to give up many things. Some of them are bad things (pride, independence, self-will), and some of them are good things (his home, his family). Nevertheless, if a soldier is not willing to give up these things, he is not a soldier at all.

ii. The things that might *entangle* a soldier might be good or bad for a civilian. The soldier can't ask if something is good or bad for those who are not soldiers; he must give up anything that gets in the way of being a good soldier or serving his commanding officer. A faithful soldier does not have the right to do anything that will entangle them and make them less effective as a soldier.

iii. "It is well remarked by *Grotius*, on this passage, that the legionary soldiers among the Romans were not permitted to engage in husbandry, merchandise, mechanical employments, or any thing that might be inconsistent with their calling." (Clarke)

d. **That he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier:** If Timothy did not endure hardship and if he did not put away the things that entangled him in the affairs of this life, he would not be pleasing to his Commanding Officer.

i. Jesus Christ is the commander of all heaven's armies. In Joshua 5, Jesus appeared to Joshua as *Commander of the army of the LORD (Jos 5:14)*. He is our Commanding Officer, and we owe total obedience to Him as such.

ii. It is likely that Paul was chained to a soldier even as he wrote this. He saw how these soldiers acted, and how they obeyed their commanding officers. Paul knew that this is how a Christian must act towards their Lord.

4. (5) *Persevere for God with an athlete's attitude.*

And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

a. **If anyone competes in athletics:** Paul often drew upon the world of athletics for illustrations of the

Christian life, mentioning track and field (1Co 9:24), boxing (1Co 9:26), and wrestling (Eph 6:12).

b. He is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules: The point is clear. An athlete can't make up the rules as he pleases; he must compete **according to the rules** if he wants to receive the crown.

i. It is possible to fall into the mistake of thinking that we can make up our own rules for our Christian life. For some people, their special arrangement goes something like this: "I know this is sin, but God *understands*, so I'll just keep going in this sin." This goes against the attitude of an athlete who must compete according to the rules.

5. (6) Persevere for God with the attitude of a farmer.

The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

a. The hard-working farmer: In calling Timothy to have the attitude of a farmer, Paul emphasized the fact that farmers are **hard-working**. In the same way, all who serve the Lord should be **hard-working**.

i. Unlike the soldier and the athlete, there is nothing glamorous about the work a farmer does. It is often tedious, boring, and unexciting. The nation's best farmer really isn't a celebrity. But he must work hard just the same.

ii. God has no place for lazy ministers. If you will not work hard, get out of the ministry. If you will only work hard if you are in the limelight, then let God change your heart.

iii. "Idle drones disgrace every department of the Christian Church. They cannot teach because they will not learn." (Clarke)

b. **Hard-working:** Paul knew the value of hard work. He could say, comparing himself with the other apostles, *I labored more abundantly than they all* (1Co 15:10). Paul wasn't just called, he wasn't just blessed, he wasn't just anointed; Paul was also **hard-working**. His ministry would have been far less than it was if he had *not* worked hard.

i. Some people expect something for nothing. But wise people know that you often get out of things according to the measure you put into them. If you are putting forth little effort in your Christian walk, you should expect little result.

ii. Yet at the same time, Paul knew that all the work he did was the gift of God's grace in him: *I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me* (1Co 15:10). Paul knew the balance of working hard, yet always knowing it is all of grace.

c. **Must be the first to partake of the crops:** When Timothy had spiritual food to give to the congregation, he must eat of it first. If he wasn't being fed from the Word of God, he couldn't really feed others.

i. An effective pastor or teacher will get more out of the message than the audience does, and his time of preparation to teach God's word will also be a time of warm fellowship with God.

d. **Partake of the crops:** Like a good farmer, any godly pastor will work hard and he will patiently await the harvest – which really comes at the end of the age, not at the end of the meeting.

6. (7) *Looking to the Lord for **understanding**.*

Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

a. **Consider what I say:** Paul has just explained three illustrations of the Christian life – a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. Each of these three occupations need great *perseverance* to succeed.

- The soldier who stops fighting before the battle is finished will never see victory.
- The athlete who stops running before the race is over will never win the race.
- The farmer who stops working before the harvest is complete will never see the fruit of his crops.

b. **May the Lord give you understanding in all things:** Timothy was instructed to see the importance of perseverance, and to receive **understanding** from the Lord in all these things.

- i. God is faithful **give** us **understanding** in all these things, and He will be faithful to give us the grace to *be strong*. God gives this and we must receive it.

B. Holding steadfast to the truth.

1. (8) The content of Paul's gospel.

Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

a. **Remember:** Paul did not give this warning because it was something Timothy might easily forget. He said it because Timothy needed to be reminded to keep this in the forefront of his message.

b. **Jesus Christ, of the seed of David:** Timothy needed to keep the fact that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel – the **seed of David** – in the forefront of his preaching.

- i. God's plan of rescue through Jesus Christ did not begin when the baby was born in Bethlehem. All of

history looked forward to what Jesus would do to save us.

c. **Who was raised from the dead:** This is the great fact, the great credential of the authenticity of Jesus Christ – His resurrection from the dead.

i. Remember that Jesus was the first one ever resurrected. Others, such as Jesus' friend Lazarus, had been *resuscitated*, but only Jesus had been *resurrected* – raised to a new order of life, with a new body, which though based on the old, was still new and fitted for the glories of eternal life.

ii. Jesus' resurrection was the proof that though it looked like He died on the cross as a common criminal, He actually died as a sinless man, giving His life out of love and self-sacrifice to bear the guilt of our sin. Jesus' death on the cross was the payment but the resurrection was the receipt, showing that the payment was received as perfect before God the Father.

d. **Of the seed of David:** This statement means that Jesus was fully man; **raised from the dead** means Jesus was fully God. For Paul, it was essential that Timothy remember and teach the truth about who Jesus was.

e. **According to my gospel:** Of course, the gospel belonged to Paul in the sense that he preached it; but it also belonged to him in the sense that he believed it. It was *his* gospel and it should also be the gospel of each individual Christian.

i. Remember what the word **gospel** means: *good news*. For Paul, the best news was not about more money, more love, more status, or more stuff. The good news was about a real relationship with God

through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

2. (9) The consequences of Paul's gospel.

For which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.

a. **For which I suffer:** This gospel did not bring Paul a life of glamour and ease. It brought him a life full of adventure and challenge, and a life also marked by suffering.

i. It was around the time Paul wrote 2 Timothy that a terrible fire destroyed much of Rome, a fire that was reportedly set by the emperor Nero as the first step of his own peculiar urban renewal program. The fire destroyed vast neighborhoods of the poor, and when they rioted, Nero blamed the Christians. He then arrested many of them – perhaps including Paul.

ii. One of the most spectacular sights in Israel is the ancient city of Beit She'an – a spectacular city that is, piece by piece, being uncovered and restored by archaeologists. If you ever visit, you can see the coliseum there – the oval stadium, complete with chambers and rooms for lions and other wild animals – animals that were almost certainly set upon Christians for the entertainment of the mob. For me, to walk on floor of that stadium – on the ground that had almost surely received the blood of Christians – was something sacred, and reminded me of the extreme price many have had to pay. In the modern western world, the price we pay for faithfulness to Jesus seems small in comparison.

iii. Any true follower of Jesus Christ will be willing to suffer with Him. Those who are determined to never

suffer for Jesus may admire Him from a distance, but they do not genuinely follow Him.

b. To the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained: Paul's wrist was shackled at the very moment he wrote this. Nevertheless, he understood that they could chain him but they could never chain **the word of God**.

i. The Bible has been attacked more than any other book through history. It has been burned, banned, mocked, twisted, and ignored – but the word of God still stands forever. *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever (Isa 40:8).*

ii. **The word of God is not chained.** No government, no religious authorities, no skeptics, no scientists, no philosophers, or no book burners have ever been able to stop the work of the Word of God. Yet, if there is any sense in which the Word is bound, it is bound when its supposed friends abandon it. When pulpits sound more like self-help books than those who proclaim God's word; when Scripture is used sparingly like a spice in a message, instead of being the core of it, pastors themselves put a chain around the Bible.

3. (10) Why Paul endures the consequences of the gospel.

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

a. **Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect:** We might have expected Paul to say he endures all things for the sake of God. Yet Paul knew that his love for God could reliably be measured by his love for God's people.

i. "St. Paul was much sustained by the thought that his labours and sufferings were, in the providence of God, beneficial to others." (White)

b. **That they may obtain the salvation:** Paul's life was not spent merely in getting people rescued in Jesus, but also in seeing them grow and become complete in their relationship with Him.

c. **Eternal glory:** The idea of **eternal glory** is hard for us to comprehend. The Bible tells us there is a glory that belongs to the people of God in eternity that is greater than any earthly glory. **Eternal glory** is worth much more than earthly glory.

4. (11-13) Paul describes his gospel with a **faithful saying**.

This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with *Him*,

We shall also live with *Him*

If we endure, we shall also reign with *Him*.

If we deny *Him*,

He also will deny us.

If we are faithless,

He remains faithful;

He cannot deny Himself.

a. **This is a faithful saying:** We know what it is like to have a worship song on our mind, one that expressing our heart. Here Paul quoted an early Christian hymn known among the Christians of his day.

b. **For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him:** The song begins with a promise of resurrection to those who have died with Jesus.

i. The Bible speaks of dying with Jesus in at least two ways.

- The first is common to all Christians, and is illustrated by baptism (Rom 6:3-5). Each of us can

have a life-after-death experience with Jesus, seeing our old life ended with Jesus on the cross, and have our new life beginning with His being raised from the dead.

- The other way the Bible speaks of dying with Jesus is, of course, in the sense of martyrdom – of paying the ultimate price for following Jesus. This is probably Paul's idea here; he is saying, "If we die with Him, we aren't dead – we live with Him." More significantly, Paul wrote this awaiting his own execution by the Roman government.

- ii. "The context here seems rather to point to physical death as the highest point of suffering for Christ. The reference then is to the martyr's death now viewed from the standpoint of the crowning day." (Hiebert)

c. **If we endure, we shall also reign with Him:** The song assures the faithful believer of eternal reward. This principle assures us that our present difficulty or trial is worth enduring. The reward is greater than what one might gain from quitting. We will **reign with Him!**

- i. The Bible says that we will rule and reign with Jesus Christ. This future destiny explains much of the difficulty described in this passage. We understand that God is training us to rule and reign beside Him in the world to come.

d. **If we deny Him, He also will deny us:** The song warns those who deny Jesus that they themselves will be denied. By doctrine or manner of living, one may deny who Jesus is, deny what He has done for us, or deny what He commands us to do.

- i. Jesus said it plainly: *But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.* (Mat 10:33)

e. **If we are faithless, He remains faithful:** We cannot deny Jesus and we must keep our allegiance to Him. Yet if one does fall away, it doesn't change who God is – **He remains faithful.**

i. It is a terrible thing when people who name the name of Jesus show themselves unfaithful; many have been turned off from Jesus because of the hypocrisy of those who take His name. But all the *faithlessness* of man doesn't disprove the *faithfulness* of God.

ii. "Our faithlessness cannot in any way detract from the Son of God and His Glory. Being all sufficient in Himself He has no need of our confession. It is as if he had said, 'Let all who will desert Christ, for they deprive him of nothing; when they perish, He remains unchanged.'" (Calvin)

iii. But the Christian can stand faithful as God empowers them. Even if one has been wavering, they still have time – as the Spirit of God calls to them even now – to turn back to the faithful God. We can be like the prodigal son, who came to his senses, saw his faithfulness, and came home to his father who had been faithful to him the whole time.

iv. When one Christian in the days of the ancient Roman Empire was commanded to give money to the building of a pagan temple, he refused; and though he was old, they stripped him practically naked, and cut him all over his body with knives and spears. They started to feel sorry for him, so they said, "Just give one dollar to the building of the temple." But he still would not. "Just burn one grain of incense to this pagan god," they asked – but he would not. So, he was smeared with honey, and while his wounds were still bleeding, they set bees and wasps upon him until

he was stung to death. He could die; but he could not deny his Lord. The Lord can give you the same strength to live for Him, even as this man died for Him.

C. Keeping attention on the most important things.

1. (14) Keep focused; don't be distracted by unprofitable things.

Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.

a. **Remind them of these things:** After reminding Timothy of the essential points of the gospel, Paul added that Timothy must always **remind** his hearers of **these things**. Timothy's job as a pastor was to keep his congregation always focused on the gospel.

i. The church is constantly tempted to get its focus off of the message that really matters, and is tempted to become an entertainment center, a social service agency, a mutual admiration society, or any number of other things. But this temptation must be resisted, and the church should constantly remember **these things**.

- The things of 2Ti 2:8 : *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.*

- The things of 2Ti 2:11-13 : *For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we deny Him, He will also deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful, He cannot deny Himself.*

b. **Not to strive about words to no profit:** At the same time, there were things that Timothy must *not* focus on. The church must stand for the truth, but it must not become a debating society.

i. We can get distracted by endless discussion or strife over things that don't have central importance. "Words, not *things*, have been a most fruitful source of contention in the Christian world; and among religious people, the principle cause of animosity has arisen from the *different manner* of apprehending the same *term*, while, in *essence*, both meant the *same thing*." (Clarke)

ii. "Let us notice first that teaching is rightly condemned on the sole ground that it does no good. God's purpose is not to pander to our inquisitiveness but to give us profitable instruction. Away with all speculations that produce no edification!" (Calvin)

c. **To the ruin of the hearers:** This shows that it is a serious matter and there is much to lose. If we take the focus off the message of God and put the focus on human opinions and endless debates, it will result in **the ruin of the hearers**.

i. The Bible says, *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Rom 10:17). Yet if people do not hear the word of God, then **ruin** comes by hearing the opinions and speculations and entertainment of man.

2. (15) *Keep focused; pay attention to your own life and ministry.*

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

a. **Be diligent:** Paul often had to exhort Timothy to courage and action. Earlier in the chapter (2Ti 2:3-5), Paul encouraged him to hard work and endurance for the service of the Lord.

b. **To present yourself approved to God:** Timothy's goal was not to present himself approved to *people*, but **to God**. He wasn't to regard the job of being a pastor as a popularity contest but instead as a call to faithfulness **to God**.

c. **To present yourself approved to God:** Timothy wasn't to worry so much about presenting other people approved to God (though there was a place for this in his pastoral ministry). His first concern had to be to present *himself* approved to God.

d. **A worker who does not need to be ashamed:** It is embarrassing to do a job poorly and then to have your work examined. The Bible warns us that the work of each Christian will be examined at the judgment seat of Christ (2Co 5:10). Therefore, we have another motivation to work diligently for the Lord, so we will not be **ashamed** when our work is examined.

i. "It is better explained as *a workman who has no cause for shame when his work is being inspected.*" (White)

e. **Rightly dividing the word of truth:** This was to be a focus of Timothy's hard work. He was to work hard so he could rightly divide the word of God.

i. Timothy, as a faithful pastor, was to be **rightly dividing** God's Word. That is, he had to know what it said and didn't say, and how it was to be understood and how it was not to be understood. It wasn't enough for Timothy to know some Bible stories and verses and sprinkle them through his sermons as illustrations. His teaching was to be a "right dividing" of the Word of God, correctly teaching his congregation.

ii. "Swords are meant to cut and hack, and wound, and kill with, and the word of truth is for pricking men in the heart and killing their sins. The word of God is not committed to God's ministers to amuse men with its glitter, nor to charm them with the jewels in its hilt, but to conquer their souls for Jesus." (Spurgeon)

iii. **Rightly dividing** has several ideas associated with the ancient term.

- *Rightly handle* the Word of God, as one would rightly handle a sword.
- *Plow straight* with the Word of God, properly presenting the essential doctrines.
- *Properly dissect and arrange* the Word of God, as a priest would dissect and arrange an animal for sacrifice.
- *Allot to each their portion*, as someone distributing food at a table.

f. **Rightly dividing**: This also means there is such a thing as *wrongly dividing*; not everyone cuts it straight. We must understand that Biblical truth is not just an issue left up to everyone's interpretation. There is a right way and a wrong way to understand the Bible, and a pastor especially must work hard to master the right interpretation.

i. For example, many people love to say when the Bible is quoted, "Well, that's just your interpretation." Their idea is, "You interpret the Bible your way, I interpret it my way, and another person interprets it their way. We can never really know what it means, so don't judge me with your Bible verse."

ii. When someone tells me, "That's just your interpretation," I think in response: "It's true that it is *my* interpretation, but it isn't *just* my interpretation, it

is the *correct* interpretation, and we need to pay attention to what the Bible says correctly interpreted."

iii. This is an important point: The Bible *does not* mean just what anyone wants it to mean. There may be many people trying to twist the Scriptures to their own ends, but they are *wrongly* **dividing the word of truth**. We can't just pick the interpretation that seems most comfortable to us and claim it as true – it must be **rightly dividing the word of truth**, and it must be consistent with what the Bible says in the specific passage and with the entire message of the Scriptures.

iv. For example, a *correct* interpretation of Mat 7:1 (*Judge not, that you be not judged*) is not the idea of "You have no right to judge my behavior or anyone else's behavior." If this were the case, then Jesus *repeatedly* broke His own commandment because He often told people their behavior was wrong in the sight of God. The correct understanding of

Mat 7:1 is easily seen by reading Mat 7:2 : *For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you*. Jesus was saying "Don't judge anyone by a standard you are not willing to be judged by. God will hold you to the same standard you hold others to." This *clearly* does not forbid judging someone else's life, but it does prohibit doing it unfairly or hypocritically, or living with a judgmental attitude.

v. The point is clear: There is a *right* way and a *wrong* way to divide the Mat 7:1, which is one verse in the word of truth. Every Christian, but pastors especially, must *work hard* to be **rightly dividing the word of truth**. Though *perfection* in understanding God's word

is impossible, and should never be assumed, we should still work hard at it.

3. (16-18) *The price of not keeping focus: The faith of some is overthrown.*

But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

a. **But shun profane and idle babblings:** This refers to anything that takes the focus off of the gospel and God's Word. These **babblings** are **profane** because they are unholy in contrast to the holiness of God's Word. They are **idle**, because even though people like to hear them, they don't have lasting value.

i. Man's opinions, man's teachings, man's opinion polls, man's stories, man's programs, are all **profane and idle babblings** compared to the simple Word of God. When these things become the focus of the message from the pulpit, it will **increase to more ungodliness**.

b. **Their message will spread like cancer:** The message of **profane and idle babblings** may spread quickly and be popular. They are like a cancer that spreads fast and captures an audience.

i. **Who** in 2Ti 2:18 "Implies that Hymenaeus and Philetus were only the more conspicuous members of a class of false teachers." (White)

c. **Hymenaeus and Philetus:** Hymenaeus is mentioned in 1Ti 1:20 as a man whom Paul *delivered to Satan that [he] may learn not to blaspheme*. This is the only place

where we hear of Philetus, and here Paul tells us of their error.

i. They were **of this sort** – that is, they had a message full of **profane and idle babblings**, and apparently the message was somewhat popular, because it spread quickly.

ii. They had **strayed concerning the truth**: Apparently, they started out correctly, and then **strayed** from that correct position.

iii. They were **saying that the resurrection is already past**: It seems they were teaching that we were already in God's millennial kingdom, or that there was no resurrection to come – it had already occurred.

iv. They did **overthrow the faith of some**: Though the only false doctrine Paul mentioned regarding these two is that they taught that **the resurrection is already past**, the effect was to **overthrow the faith of some**. Undoubtedly, this was not their *only* error; and a fundamental error in such an area often leads to many more strange beliefs, until one has abandoned Jesus and His truth all together.

v. Many today accept and honor teachers who are way off in one area or another; and they justify it by saying, "I eat the meat and spit out the bones." This kind of thinking will *certainly* **overthrow the faith of some** because some will *certainly* choke to spiritual death on the bones you say you spit out.

vi. Notice Paul said, **they overthrow the faith of some**. We shouldn't require that *everyone* be led astray by a teacher before we avoid them; even if *some* are having their faith overthrown, it is bad enough.

4. (19) *The reward of focus: **The solid foundation of God.***

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

a. **Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands:** In the preceding passage, Paul sounded as if he were under severe attack and might not stand against the rising tide of deception and wickedness. But here, he makes it clear, both to himself and to us that the kingdom of God cannot be shaken.

i. Though men like Hymenaeus and Philetus made dangerous attacks against the church and their message spread like cancer, and even though the faith of some might be overthrown, **nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands.**

ii. God has a plan, God has a purpose, God has a strategy, and it is not going to fail. It doesn't matter how many fall away, how many reject the truth, how many go their own way after *profane and vain babblings* – **Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands.**

b. **Having this seal:** There are two seals on the solid foundation of God. "The one seal bears two inscriptions, two mutually complementary parts or aspects." (White)

i. It seems that Paul drew these allusions from Numbers 16, in reference to the rebellion of Korah.

- **The Lord knows those who are His:** "The words are taken from Num 16:5, 'In the morning the Lord will show who are His.'" (White)

- **Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity:** "The language is perhaps

another echo of the story of Korah (Num 16:26-27). But Isa 52:11 is nearer in sentiment.” (White)

c. **The Lord knows those who are His:** This is the first inscription on the seal. If Hymenaeus and Philetus continue their destructive ministry, **the Lord knows those who are His**. If profane and vain babblings sweep through the church like cancer, **the Lord knows those who are His**. If the faith of some is overthrown, **the Lord knows those who are His**.

i. We don't always know **those who are His**. We can know for ourselves, for as Rom 8:16 says, *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*. But with others, we cannot always know **those who are His**.

ii. God does not sit in heaven, wondering and worrying if you are saved or not. He does not hope or wonder if you will make it to the end. He knows. **The Lord knows those who are His**.

d. **Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity:** This is the second inscription on the foundation of God. It is true that God knows those who are His; and He calls those who are His to leave their sin behind.

i. Some might say, “I belong to the Lord, I know I'm His. I am going to heaven. It doesn't matter so much how I live.” Yet, such a son has forgotten that there are *two* inscriptions on the foundation of God. There are *two* – and those who **are His** will have the desires and the actions to **depart from iniquity**.

ii. If someone does not have the desire or the actions to **depart from iniquity**, it is fair to ask if they really belong to Jesus or if they have just deceived themselves.

e. **The solid foundation of God stands:** It isn't going to change; therefore, we can keep our focus on it. It is hard to focus on something that often changes, so God gave us a solid foundation in His Word to keep our focus on.

i. "The first seal marked it for the Lord, the second secured its removal from the common stones around it. First comes election, and sanctification follows. I want every professing Christian to have that double mark, and so to be Christ's man, known of all to be such by coming out from the unclean, and being separated unto the Lord." (Spurgeon)

D. Living your life and being used by God.

1. (20-21) *Vessels of honor and dishonor.*

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

a. **But in a great house:** Paul just used the picture of God's building (*the solid foundation of God stands*). Now he thinks of that building as a **great house** that has a variety of **vessels** in it – bowls, plates, vases, and other such things.

i. The church of God is indeed a **great house**.

- It is a **great house** because of *who it belongs to*. The house of our great God is certainly a **great house**.

- It is a **great house** because it is planned and designed on a great scale. It has the most brilliant Architect and houses a great multitude of the greatest people to ever walk the earth.

- It is a **great house** because of the great cost it took to build it. This is a mansion far more valuable than any real estate on earth, built by the great work of Jesus on the cross.
- It is a **great house** because of its importance. This house and what happens in it is at the center of God's plan of the ages. The business of this house is more important than any of the trivia most of the world is interested in.

b. **Vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay:** Some of these **vessels** are made of **gold and silver**, and some are made of **wood and clay**. Some are used on occasions of great **honor** (the gold and silver vessels), and some are used for **dishonor** – such as a garbage bin or an ashtray.

c. **Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter:** The **latter** things are the things of **dishonor** mentioned in 2Ti 2:20. If we cleanse ourselves from dishonorable things, God will regard us as **vessels of honor, sanctified and useful for the Master**.

d. **If anyone cleanses himself:** Paul spoke about a cleansing that isn't just something God does for us as we sit passively. This is a *self-cleansing for service* that goes beyond a general cleansing for sin.

i. There is a main aspect of cleansing which comes to us as we trust in Jesus and His work on our behalf. This work of cleansing is really God's work in us and not our work. This is the sense of 1Jn 1:9 : *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

ii. But there is another aspect of cleansing which God looks for us to do with the participation of our own will and effort. Not that it is our work apart from God, but

it is a work that awaits our will and effort: **If anyone cleanses himself**. This aspect of cleansing is mostly connected with usefulness for service, and closeness to God.

iii. "Oh, happy be you that you be now in this scouring-house; for shortly you shall be set upon the celestial shelf as bright as angels." (Trapp)

e. **Sanctified and useful: Sanctified** means *set apart*, just as much as there are certain bowls and plates that we use more than others, or are set aside to some honorable purpose, so some people are more **sanctified and useful** to God than others. They are more **prepared for every good work** than others.

i. We must never think that some Christians are better than others, or that some have passed into a place where they are super-spiritual. However, we must also realize that some Christians *are* more able to be used by God than others, because they have cleansed themselves, and made themselves more usable to God.

f. **Prepared for every good work:** We must not think of being usable primarily in the sense of serving in the church. God wants to use His people for **every good work**, including those at the workplace, the school, in the home, in the community. This happens as one will cleanse himself and set yourself aside to God as a **vessel for honor**.

i. There is a large sense in which it is left to us how we want to be used by God. We have the potential to be used as a **vessel of honor** or as a vessel of **dishonor**. According to this picture, we could be a gold platter in the house of God, beautifully displaying the fruit of the Spirit. Or we could be an ashtray or a garbage can in God's house.

ii. Your conduct – clean or unclean; set apart to God or not set apart to God; useful to Jesus or not useful to Jesus – really matters. It greatly effects how God can use you and will use you to touch the lives of others.

2. (22-23) *How to cleanse yourself.*

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

a. **Flee also youthful lusts:** This is the first aspect of cleansing that Paul mentioned to Timothy. **Youthful lusts** describe the sort of desires and temptations that are especially prominent when someone is an adolescent or young adult. Sexual temptation, illicit pleasure of the flesh, and a longing for fame and glory often mark one's youth.

i. The command is simple: **Flee also youthful lusts.** Don't entertain them. Don't challenge them. Don't try and endure them. The idea of "I will just test myself on this one to see if I can stand against it" has made many fall into sin.

ii. If you cannot **flee also youthful lusts**, there is a real limit to how much God can use you, a limit to how *useful to the Master* you will be. You can't really say "yes" to God until you can say "no" to some other things.

iii. "He has just been cautioned against the errors of the intellect; he must be warned also against vices of the blood." (White)

b. **But pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace:** Cleansing can never be a matter of just avoiding bad things. It must also be the pursuit of good things.

Therefore, there are both things that we must **flee** from and things we must **pursue**.

c. Pursue... peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart: To be cleansed, we must do everything we can to be right in our personal relationships with others. Cleansing needs to extend to how we treat others.

i. Sometimes relationships are not right with others, but we have done all we can do to set it right. We must take great care that we do all we can do. As Paul wrote in Rom 12:18 : *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

ii. Bad relationships really hinder our service to the Lord. We must do what we can to set things right if we want to be used of God as much as we can be.

d. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes: Walking clean also means staying clear of endless disputes and arguments. These distracting interests can limit how much God can use us.

3. (24-26) The kind of attitude God can use: The gentle servant.

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

a. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all: The great men of our world are not usually thought of as servants nor as gentle. Yet in the kingdom of God, greatness is marked by being **a servant of the Lord** and by being **gentle to all**.

i. "Paul's meaning is that gentleness should be shown even to those who least deserve it, and even if at first there is no apparent hope of progress, still the challenge must be accepted." (Calvin)

b. **A servant of the Lord must:** When Paul wrote to Timothy about **a servant of the Lord**, he told him about some of the basic characteristics of a godly pastor.

i. Timothy **must not quarrel but be gentle to all**. It was not his job as a pastor to pick fights and to look for conflict. Some men only feel energized and motivated if they have an argument; Timothy (and every pastor) should be of a different sort.

ii. Timothy must be **able to teach**. With the great emphasis Paul placed on God's Word, a pastor who is not **able to teach** is like a surgeon who can't use a scalpel.

iii. Timothy must be **patient**. God's work often takes time. Sometimes we can see why it takes so much time, sometimes we can't – but God is not in a hurry, and wants us to learn how to patiently trust Him.

iv. Timothy must be **in humility correcting those who are in opposition**: The gentleness and patience Timothy must have does not mean he is to never confront those who need to be confronted; but he must do it **in humility**.

c. **In humility correcting those who are in opposition**: Paul specifically told Timothy how to correct these opposing ones.

i. **If God perhaps will grant them repentance**: They need to repent, and this repentance will never happen apart from a work of God in their heart.

ii. **If God perhaps will grant them repentance**: The idea is not, "Maybe God will or maybe God won't

grant them repentance.” The idea is more, “It’s remarkable thing to see this work of God, and I won’t presume upon it happening.”

iii. **So that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses:** Anyone who fights against God is deceived and must come to their senses; repentance flows as someone comes to the truth in this way.

iv. **And escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him:** Those who are in opposition to God’s work, whether they know it or not, are bound in a demonic deception, and are doing the devil’s work. They need to **escape the snare of the devil**, and God is ready to set them free.

d. **Taken captive by him to do his will:** Paul spoke of those who serve the devil and those who serve God. There is a choice for every person, every Christian, who they will decide to serve.

i. To be a servant of the Lord – a vessel of honor for Him – we must be empty, clean, and available. If we refuse to empty ourselves, clean ourselves, and make ourselves available to the Lord, we will find ourselves captive to the devil in one sense or another.

Godlessness in the Last Days

2Ti 3:1 But know this, that in the last days grievous times will be upon us .

2Ti 3:2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, braggarts, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2Ti 3:3 without natural feeling, unyielding, slanderers, without self-control, savage, haters of good,

2Ti 3:4 betrayers, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

2Ti 3:5 having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; even turn away from these.

2Ti 3:6 For of these are those creeping into houses and leading silly women captive, the ones having been heaped with sins, being led away by various lusts,

2Ti 3:7 always learning, but never being able to come to a full knowledge of the truth.

2Ti 3:8 But in the way Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so also these withstand the truth, men having been corrupted in mind, found worthless as to the faith.

2Ti 3:9 But they will not go further, for their foolishness will be plain to all, as also that of those became.

All Scripture Is Breathed Out by God

2Ti 3:10 But you have closely followed my doctrine, the conduct, the purpose, the faith, the long-suffering, the love, the patient endurance,

2Ti 3:11 the persecutions, the sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra, what persecutions I bore. And the Lord delivered me out of all.

2Ti 3:12 And, indeed, all desiring to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

2Ti 3:13 But evil men and pretenders will go forward to worse, leading astray and being led astray.

2Ti 3:14 But you keep on in what you learned and were assured of, knowing from whom you learned,

2Ti 3:15 and that from a babe you know the Holy Scriptures, those being able to make you wise to salvation through belief in Christ Jesus.

2Ti 3:16 Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2Ti 3:17 so that the man of God may be perfected, fully furnished for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:1-17

2 Timothy 3 – Perilous Times and Precious Truth

"As he lies in his cell, a prisoner of the Lord, Paul is still preoccupied with the future of the gospel. His mind dwells now on the evil of the times, now on the diffidence of Timothy. Timothy is so weak, and the opposition so strong."
(John Stott)

A. Perilous times mean that discernment matters.

1. (1) *Perilous times in the **last days**.*

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

a. **In the last days perilous times will come:** The word translated **perilous** has the idea of troubles, difficulty, and stressful situations. This sort of atmosphere will mark the **last days**.

i. "The word was used in classical Greek both of dangerous wild animals and of the raging sea. Its only other New Testament occurrence is in the story of the two Gaderene demoniacs who were as savage and untamed as wild beasts and whom Matthew describes as 'so *fierce* that no one could pass that way' (Mat 8:28)." (Stott)

ii. The characteristics Paul will describe speak not of bad *times*, but of bad *people*. "We should note what the hardness or danger of this time is in Paul's view to be, not war, not famine or diseases, nor any of the other calamities or ills that befall the body, but the wicked and depraved ways of men." (Calvin)

iii. "The description in this and in the following verses the Papists apply to the Protestants; the Protestants

in turn apply it to the Papists; *Schoettgen* to the *Jews*; and others to *heretics* in general... but it is probable that the apostle had some particular age in view, in which there should appear some very essential corruption of Christianity." (Clarke)

b. **In the last days**: This is a broad term in the New Testament, broad enough to where one could say that **the last days** began with the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost (Act 2:17). The days of the Messiah mark **the last days**; yet the term is especially appropriate to the season immediately before the return of Jesus and the consummation of all things.

i. Though some think that any attention paid to the **last days** or Biblical prophecy is frivolous, we should be able to discern when the **last days** are; or at least when world conditions are like the Bible described they would be in the **last days**.

ii. "There are sanguine brethren who are looking forward to everything growing better and better and better, until, at last, this present age ripens into a millennium. They will not be able to sustain their hopes, for Scripture gives them no solid basis to rest upon... Apart from the second Advent of our Lord, the world is more likely to sink into a pandemonium than to rise into a millennium." (Spurgeon)

iii. In Mat 16:1-4, Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His day because they did not or would not understand the meaning of their times: *Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times* (Mat 16:3). It is possible that Jesus would have the same rebuke for some Christians today who are unaware of the **last days** and the soon return of Jesus Christ.

2. (2-5) *A description of the human condition in the last days.*

For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

a. **Men will be lovers of themselves:** This is certainly characteristic of our present age, when men and women are encouraged to love themselves. People are told to love themselves unconditionally and that such self-love is the foundation for a healthy human personality.

i. We don't need to be encouraged to love ourselves; we naturally have such a love. Neither should we be taught to hate ourselves, but as Paul said in Rom 12:3 : *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.* We must see ourselves as we really are – both the bad of what we are in the flesh and the glory of what we are in Jesus Christ.

ii. This love of self is the foundation for all the depravity that follows in Paul's description: "But readers should note that *lovers of themselves*, which comes first, can be regarded as the source from which all the others that follow spring." (Calvin)

iii. "It is no accident that the first of these qualities will be *a life that is centred in self*. The adjective used is *philautos*, which means *self-loving*. Love of self is the basic sin, from which all others flow. The moment a

man makes his own will the centre of life, divine and human relationships are destroyed, obedience to God and charity to men both become impossible. The essence of Christianity is not the enthronement but the obliteration of self." (Barclay)

iv. "'Lovers of self' aptly heads the list since it is the essence of all sin and the root from which all the other characteristics spring. The word is literally 'self-lovers' and points to the fact that the center of gravity of the natural man is self rather than God." (Hiebert)

b. **Men will be... lovers of money:** The love of money is nothing new, but today people have the ability to pursue our love of money like never before.

i. In recent years newspapers featured a story about a woman named Brenda Blackman, who enjoyed some measure of success teaching a course titled *How to Marry Money*. The course attempts to show men and women how to marry rich, and costs \$39 per person. In the course Blackman offered helpful hints, such as how to search through your prospective mate's checkbooks to study their deposits and then assess their income levels. She built her student's confidence by leading them in a chant several times through the lecture: "I want to be rich! I deserve to be rich! I am rich! I was born to be rich!" In one class, Blackman was asked by a woman if it was all right to settle for a man whose income was about \$100,000 a year. "No way," she replied. What if he was perfect in every other way? "If he was in his peak earning years and he was maxed out at \$100,000 – forget it," Blackman advised. When someone asked her about the place of love in such relationships, Blackman said that finding a mate with that much money is the hard

part; learning to love that person is easy by comparison. "How could you not love someone who is doing all these wonderful things for you?" she said. Blackman was single as she taught these courses.

c. Men will be... boasters, proud, blasphemers:

Boasting, pride, and blasphemy are nothing new; but today, they seem far more prominent than ever.

i. Boasting, pride, and blasphemy each act as if *I* am the most important person. Each of them say, "You don't matter and God does not matter. All that matters is me."

ii. Today boasting, pride, and blasphemy are apparent everywhere, especially among the celebrities that our cultures idolizes. Many people today become wealthy by calculated boasting, pride, and blasphemy.

d. Men will be... disobedient to parents: Since the mid 1960s there has been a frightening breakdown in the authority once assumed by a child towards their parents.

i. Several years ago a judge in Orlando Florida ruled that an 11-year-old boy had the right to seek a "divorce" from his parents so that he could be adopted by a foster family. But though there are few legal divorces from parents by children, it is far more common that young people simply disregard their parents.

ii. In the 1990s, a 13-year-old Los Angeles area graffiti vandal was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*: "It's like a family to belong to a crew. They watch your back, you watch theirs. You kick it everyday with them... You get friendship, love, supplies, everything." He also says: "I'll tag anything... Now I don't care. Well, sort of. I wouldn't like no one to write on my

stuff. I do it to get known, to get up, regardless if people feel that I'm causing damage to property. I'd say the damage I've done is quite a bit. During the day I carry a screwdriver or a knife for protection. But at night I carry a gun. I have three guns. I hide them. My mom took a .38 from me. I'm getting it back." When asked about once when he got caught, he said: "My parents sort of talked to me about it. Of course they told me, 'Don't do it again.' But I'm not gonna listen, and they don't have to know about it."

e. **Men will be... unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving:** Ever since Adam, humankind has been marked by these things to one degree or another. Here, Paul said these things will be especially prevalent *in the last days*.

i. **Unloving** (translated *without natural affection* in the KJV) literally means, "without family love." Paul said that the end times would be marked by an attitude of growing disregard of normal family love and obligation.

f. **Men will be... slanderers:** Men have always told hurtful lies about other men; but today, in media and in politics, slander has been elevated to both big business and big money.

i. In politics, candidates routinely and knowingly distort their opponent's positions, just to make their competition look bad – and they don't feel bad at all about the lying if it helps them get elected. In media, editors and news directors serve as prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner to innocents who are wrongly suspected – and usually refuse to apologize when they are proven to be wrong.

g. **Men will be... without self control:** The story of no self-control can be written across almost everything

today – sex, drugs, alcohol, food, work. Whatever we do, we often do it out of control.

i. In the 1990s the *Los Angeles Times* published an article about Michelle, who was a successful writer and editor. She feared the day her husband might discover her secret stash of credit cards, her secret post office box or the other tricks she used to hide how much money she spent shopping for herself. “I make as much money as my husband... If I want a \$500 suit from Ann Taylor, I deserve it and don’t want to be hassled about it. So the easiest thing to do is lie,” she explained. Last year, when her husband forced her to destroy one of her credit cards, Michelle went out and got a new one without telling him. “I do live in fear. If he discovers this new VISA, he’ll kill me.” A school teacher explained more: “Men just don’t understand that shopping is our drug of choice,” she joked, even while admitting that some months her salary goes exclusively to paying the minimum balance on her credit cards. “Walking through the door of South Coast Plaza is like walking through the gates of heaven. God made car trunks for women to hide shopping bags in.” A young professional named Mary explained: “Shopping is my recreation. It’s my way of pampering myself. When you walk into [a mall] and you see all the stores, it’s like something takes over and you get caught up in it.”

h. **Men will be... brutal:** Cruelty and brutality are nothing new in the world; but Paul wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the *last days* would be marked by a particular brutality.

i. A newspaper article in the 1990s described how an Oxnard man was accused of murdering his roommate after the two disagreed over the brand of beer the

man had brought home. The accused man brought home Natural Light, and the murdered man wanted him to bring home Michelob. As he poured the Natural Light down the kitchen sink, he was stabbed to death.

ii. We like to think of ourselves as more advanced than previous generations; but surely more people have been murdered in our century than ever before; these are violent, brutal times.

i. **Men will be... despisers of good:** There just seem to be too many examples of this in modern society to pick out examples. For one example, there was a time when most people thought letting people live was good and killing them was generally a bad thing. Today, we live in a culture when the simple good of *life* is now despised and attacked, through abortion, through the glorifying of violence and murder, and through euthanasia.

i. On March 6, 1996, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals declared the United States Constitution gives every American the right to kill someone else. Essentially, the court said that if you *think* someone might want to die – even if they have never said so – you can kill them and no law can stop you. You can kill someone if you are a doctor, a nurse, a pharmacist, a family member, or a “significant other” to a person you think wants to die. From the Judge’s ruling: “When patients are no longer able to pursue liberty or happiness and do not wish to pursue life,” they can be killed. The Federal Judge directly tied his decision to the right to abortion on demand. The reasoning seems to be that if the state must allow us to kill humans in the womb, it must also allow them to kill them later.

j. **Men will be... traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God:** These characteristics are all about one thing: *Self*. Men are **traitors** because of *self*, they are **headstrong** because of *self*, they are **haughty** because of *self*, and they are **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God** because of *self*.

i. This attitude marks our current age. For example, think of national advertising slogans from the late 1990s:

- *Nothing is taboo.*
- *Break all the rules.*
- *To know no boundaries.*
- *Relax: No rules here.*
- *Peel off inhibitions. Find your own road.*
- *We are all hedonists and want to do what feels good. That's what makes us human.*
- *Living without boundaries.*
- *Just do it.*

The message is the same: You make your own rules. You answer to no one. You are the one that matters. Your universe revolves around you.

ii. We don't have to choose between pleasure and God. Serving God is the ultimate pleasure; Psa 16:11 says, *At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore*. But we do have to choose between the *love* of pleasure and the *love* of God. Living for God will give you many pleasures, but they only come as you love God first and refuse to love the pleasures themselves.

k. **Having a form of godliness but denying its power:** In our self-obsessed world, people feel very free

to have a “salad bar” religion – they pick and choose what they want. They feel free to be very “spiritual,” but sense no obligation to be *Biblical*.

i. In the late 1990s it was reported that the Reverend John Canning delivered the eulogy after Leo and Hazel Gleese were slain, telling mourners that he had been so close to the couple that he could call them Mom and Dad. On Friday, six weeks later, Canning was led off to jail in handcuffs, charged with beating and strangling the 90-year-old couple. Police say the Gleeses were killed in their home January 2 after they discovered Canning had abused the power of attorney they gave him and was stealing their savings. “It’s the most despicable thing I’ve ever heard of,” said Phil Ramer, a Florida Department of Law Enforcement agent. “Of all people in the world you should be able to trust, it’s your pastor. They couldn’t do it in this case, and he wound up killing them.” The pastor was a suspect from the start because he waited a day to report he found the couple dead in their home. “When it takes somebody a day to report two dead bodies, it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to say who the suspect is,” Ramer said. The minister passed the time before reporting the deaths by spending a day at the beach and dining out with friends.

ii. A 63-year-old married woman wrote to Dear Abby to justify her adultery. She writes: “He’s also married. We meet once a week at a motel for three hours of heaven. My husband knows nothing about this, and neither does my lover’s wife. Sex with my husband is even better now, and it’s not as though I am denying my husband anything. I teach a class at church every week, but for some reason, I feel no guilt.”

iii. When we talk about the **power** of godliness, we often mean it in the sense of “power to give me what I want.” But this is exactly *opposite* of what Paul meant here. The **power** of godliness that men will despise in the last days is the power it should have to guide their lives; power in the sense of rightful authority – and many, many, today deny that God has the *power* to tell them what to do through His Word.

I. From such people turn away! The command to **turn away** from people described by the characteristics in this list is especially difficult in our present day.

i. People who do the things on this list are not only common today but they are often also our cultural heroes. The simple responsibility of Christians is to **turn away** not only these attitudes, but also from the people who do these things.

ii. Many think it is enough if they themselves are not like this, and give little heed to the company they keep. But if we spend time with people like this – either personally or by allowing us to entertain us – they will influence on us. As Paul wrote in 1Co 15:33 : *Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*

iii. **From such turn away** also means that Paul knew those marked by the spirit of the last days were present in Timothy’s own day. However, we should expect that they would be even more numerous and have increased power in the last days shortly before the return of Jesus.

iv. “This exhortation clearly implies that Paul did not consider the state of moral depravity just pictured as wholly a matter of the future. He was keenly aware

that the evils about which he was forewarning were already at work.” (Hiebert)

3. (6-7) *The strategy of the corrupt in the last days.*

For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

a. **Those who creep into households:** Paul knew that they dangers were in the world in his day and would be increasingly present in the last days before the return of Jesus. However, he seemed especially concerned that these would **creep into households**. It is one thing to have such evil present in the world; it is another thing to allow it into your home.

b. **Make captives of gullible women:** Those marked by the last days depravity Paul mentioned in the previous verses want to take others captive, and it can do this among the **gullible**, those who will believe or pay attention to most anything if it is packaged the right way.

i. One should know if they are indeed one of these **captives** that Paul mentioned, bound by the influence of this end times rejection of God and celebration of self. There is one effective way to know: walk away from any kind of worldly influence and see if there are chains that make your escape difficult. Take a week off from letting *anything* marked by the spirit of the last days into your household – and see if chains bind you back to those things.

ii. Paul singled out **gullible women** simply because in that day, women spent far more time at home than the men, and were far more exposed to any

corruption that would infiltrate the household. "Also he speaks here of women rather than men, for they are more liable to be taken in by such impostors." (Calvin)

c. **Led away by various lusts:** Obviously, the spirit of the last days finds its appeal to us by exciting **various lusts** within us. It appeals to the desire to be excited sexually, or romantically, or to have our desires for comfort or wealth or status satisfied.

d. **Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:** The spirit of the last days has a certain intelligence about it; the high priests of the spirit of the last days know how to make things work and how to lead us **away by various lusts**. But for all their skill, for all of their marketing brilliance and knowledge, they never come to **truth**.

i. Indeed, the spirit of the last days has a problem with the idea of "true truth" altogether, because it believes that we each are the center of our own universe and we each create our own truth. According to the spirit of the last days there is no truth outside of ourselves, so we can learn and learn and learn, but we will never come to God's eternal truth.

ii. "There are many professors of Christianity still who answer the above description. They hear, repeatedly hear, it may be, good sermons; but, as they seldom meditate on what they hear, they derive little profit from the ordinances of God. They have no more grace *now* than they had *several years ago*, though hearing all the while, and perhaps not wickedly departing from the Lord. They do not meditate, they do not think, they do not reduce what they hear to practice; therefore, even under the preaching of an

apostle, they could not become wise to salvation.”
(Clarke)

4. (8-9) *An example of this sort of corrupt human condition: **Jannes and Jambres**, who **resisted Moses**.*

Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

a. **Jannes and Jambres:** Though they were not named for us in the Exodus account, these two men are the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses before Pharaoh (Exo 7:8-13; Exo 7:19-23; Exo 8:5-7; Exo 8:16-19).

b. **Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses:** These were able to work *real miracles* – not mere parlor tricks – but by the power of darkness and not the power of God. When Moses cast down his rod and it turned into a serpent, Jannes and Jambres could do the same. When he turned water into blood, they could do the same. When Moses brought forth a plague of frogs, Jannes and Jambres could do the same. Yet eventually they could not match God miracle-for-miracle, and their occult powers were shown to be inferior to God’s power.

i. The ability to do miracles by the power of darkness and the willingness to receive them as authentic will characterize the end times (Rev 13:13-15 and 2Th 2:9).

ii. Some of us are amazed by any spiritual power that is *real*, without carefully thinking that real power may have a demonic source instead of a Godly source. And even if a psychic or new age power seems to feel right, we must not be seduced by it because demonic

powers can come masquerading as *angels of light* (2Co 11:15).

c. **Resisted Moses:** The resistance of truth by Jannes and Jambres was shown by their ability to cooperate with demonic powers to do miracles. In the last days, men will also **resist** the truth.

d. **They will progress no further:** Even as **Jannes and Jambres** were eventually put to shame (though for a while they matched Moses “miracle for miracle”) and were eventually compelled to give reluctant glory to God, so also will the evil men of the last days. Even as Jannes and Jambres’ power had limits, so does Satan’s power, even in the last days – God is still in control.

i. This is the message of great hope in the midst of this great darkness – the spirit of the last days has an answer to it in Jesus Christ. The spirit of the last days is not stronger than the power of Jesus. The glorious truth is that we don’t have to be bound by the spirit of our times; we don’t have to be slaves to self and have our universe revolve around something as puny as our selves. There is hope, triumphant hope, in Jesus.

ii. “What is remarkable about this analogy, however, is not just that the Asian false teachers are likened to the Egyptian magicians but that Paul is thereby likening himself to Moses!” (Stott)

B. Faithfulness to God in difficulty and opposition.

1. (10-12) *Persecution and following Jesus.*

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the

Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

a. **But you:** Paul has just described the kind of people that will threaten the church in the last days and which Timothy must contend with in his own day. **But you** showed that Paul drew a clear dividing line between Timothy and those ruled by the spirit of the last days.

b. **You have carefully followed:** This is what made Timothy stand from the spirit of his age. He had **carefully followed** Paul's **doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions.**

i. **Carefully followed** means that Paul did not merely *teach* Timothy these things in an academic sense; Timothy learned these things by **carefully following** Paul's example. The best kind of Christianity is not only *taught*, it is also *caught* by seeing it lived out in other people.

ii. It all began with Timothy catching Paul's **doctrine**. The reason Paul lived the way he lived was because he believed certain things. What we believe will determine how we live.

iii. Timothy caught Paul's **manner of life**: There was just a certain way that Paul lived, and Timothy was around him enough to learn it and follow it.

iv. Timothy caught Paul's **purpose**: Paul's life had a purpose. It was not without direction. He was going somewhere, and that purpose had been established by God. Timothy saw that in Paul, he caught it, and he wanted to live his life that way.

v. Timothy caught Paul's **faith, longsuffering, and love**: you could see in Paul that he had a **faith** not everyone had, and Timothy wanted to catch it. Paul

was **longsuffering** – that is, patient with the little irritations of people and life in a special way, and he had a **love** that made him stand out. Remember all of these flowed forth from the **doctrine** – the truth – Paul held on to and Timothy carefully followed.

c. **Perseverance, persecutions, afflictions:** Timothy also caught these from Paul. We might think that the person who lives their life with the right **doctrine**, with the right **manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering**, and **love** would be loved and accepted by everyone – but they are not.

i. In fact, some level of persecution is *certain* for people who carefully follow this kind of life: **Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

ii. In our own day, Christians are being persecuted all over the world – in China, in the Muslim world, even in Russia, where a strong anti-missionary law was just passed. And we can face persecution in a social way today.

iii. Christians are persecuted for the same reason Jesus was persecuted: *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* (Joh 3:19)

d. **Which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra:** Paul reminded Timothy of the specific occasions of persecution which he endured.

- **At Antioch**, where Paul was kicked out of the city for preaching the gospel (Act 13:50).

- **At Iconium**, where Paul was almost executed by stoning (Act 14:5).

- **At Lystra**, where they actually did stone Paul and leave him for dead (Act 14:19).

e. **And out of them all the Lord delivered me:** Paul remembered this as he sat in prison and waited for execution. He knew that God was completely able to deliver him again, or that He might not. Paul seemed at complete peace, leaving it in the Lord's hands. Persecution was not going to stop Paul from following hard after Jesus Christ.

i. Persecution must not stop Christians today. We may not face much violent or even economic persecution in our culture; but there is a great deal of social persecution Christians must deal with. 1Pe 4:4 describes the mind-set of many of those who socially persecute Christians: *They think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.* Does anyone think you are strange?

ii. If we are not willing to have others think us strange; if we are not willing to be rejected by some for the sake of Jesus Christ; if we are not willing to be an outcast before some people, then we can never be true followers of Jesus Christ.

2. (13-15) *The course of evil men and the course of the godly.*

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

a. **But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse:** **Evil men** refers to the obvious, open enemies of Jesus; **impostors** refers to those who appear good and many think of as fine, but they are actually destructive forces among Jesus' followers.

i. These two kinds of people (**evil men** and **impostors**) will **grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived**. Paul gave us insight into how many people are effective deceivers among God's people – they themselves are **being deceived**.

ii. Motives are important, but we can sometimes place too much importance on them. Much harm has been done by people who were sincerely deceived and who tried to do wrong things out of wonderful motives – and because others look at their wonderful hearts, they accept their dangerous deceptions. We can't always go only by motives in others; we must measure them also by the *truth*.

b. **But you must continue in the things which you have learned:** This is the key point to this section, around which the rest of the section develops. The command itself is simple enough to understand. He told Timothy to abide – it's the same ancient Greek verb as when John wrote, *therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning* (1Jn 2:24).

i. It was as if Paul wrote this: "Timothy, you learned these things. Right now you firmly believe them. Now, you have to **continue in the things which you have learned**. The important thing is to abide in them, to continue in them, to never let them go."

ii. **But you:** A.T. Robertson called this an "Emphatic contrast." Timothy was to strongly set himself *against* the course that some other men took.

iii. Yet the words “**But you**” go back even further, marking a contrast to what came earlier in the letter.

- There are approved and disapproved workers – **you must continue** in the things which you have learned.
- There will be dangerous times and dangerous men in the last days – **you must continue** in the things which you have learned.
- There will be hardship and sometimes persecution as you follow the Lord – but **you must continue** in the things which you have learned.

c. **You must continue in the things which you have learned:** The plural suggests that the command is somewhat broader. The core is faithfulness to God’s word, but through the letter we see that this refers to a pattern of ministry.

i. This was all centered on God’s word, but “**the things which you have learned**” seems to be more than just Paul’s Bible studies; it was those, but also his pattern of ministry.

ii. This pattern of ministry doesn’t deal much with specifics, such as when to have Christian services, how long to have them, a schedule for what to do during service, and so on. The emphasis is on a pattern, a philosophy, and then Timothy was to implement that into his own situation.

d. **You must continue in the things which you have learned:** The rest of the passage – up until the fourth chapter – simply describes for us what this means, and why it was so important for Timothy to do this.

i. It is wonderful to see that God gives us *reasons* to continue – it isn’t just, “Well, that is what we do” or “We have always done it that way.” God is good enough to give us *reasons*.

e. **And been assured of:** This puts the idea in the past tense, as if this was something that Timothy was once assured of, but perhaps now he wasn't so sure. Perhaps he wavered from time to time, so Paul called him back to this.

f. **Knowing from whom you have learned them:** Continue in the things you have learned, *remembering who taught you those things*. It was as if Paul wrote, "Remember, Timothy: you learned these things *from me*." Paul was too humble to say his own name here, but it certainly seems that is what he meant.

i. There is some debate among manuscripts whether **whom** is singular or plural. I think the context pushes us towards the idea that it is singular; Paul here refers to his own influence on Timothy.

- Paul led him to Christ.
- Paul gave him ministry opportunity
- Paul taught him by both word and example.
- Paul laid hands on him in ordination.
- Paul guided and mentored him in the midst of ministry.

ii. So, Timothy was to remember who taught him these things, **knowing from whom you have learned them**. Paul's idea included:

- Remember how I strongly and confidently I believe these things.
- Remember the love with which I believe these things.
- Remember the urgency with which I believe these things.

g. **That from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures:** Continue in the things you have learned, *that you have received as a heritage*. This truth didn't begin with Timothy or even with Paul, but it is part of a long heritage that was passed on to Timothy.

i. **From childhood** means that it came to him through the influence of his grandmother and mother – Lois and Eunice, respectively. From his young childhood, they taught him.

ii. Timothy learned this starting in **childhood**. "The story of Mistress Elizabeth Wheatenhall, daughter of Mr. Anthony Wheatenhall, of Tenterden in Kent, late deceased, is very memorable. She being brought up by her aunt, the Lady Wheatenhall, before she was nine years old (not much above eight), could say all the New Testament by heart; yea, being asked where any words thereof were, she could presently name book, chapter, and verse." (Trapp)

iii. **Holy Scriptures:** This use here referred to the Old Testament, because that is what Timothy would have learned from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.

iv. **From childhood you have known:** Timothy had known the word of God from his earliest years; yet see how strong the exhortation is from Paul that he *continue* in them! Nothing is assumed; the furthest thing from Paul's mind is an attitude that says, "Well of course we are all founded on the Bible and we can assume that and move on to other things." For Paul this was never assumed – not even with his trusted protégé Timothy.

h. **From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures:** It's as if Paul said this: "Timothy, continue in what you received from me. But never forget that it

didn't start with me; it's a heritage that was passed on to you. You came into contact with all this long before you ever knew me. You came into contact with this heritage through **the Holy Scriptures.**"

i. We're happy to belong to the same church as Moody and Spurgeon, and Luther and Zwingli; the same church as Wesley and Whitefield, and Polycarp and Ignatius. We are part of them and they are part of us, because we are connected by our trust in the same Jesus, revealed to us by the same **Holy Scriptures.**

i. **Which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus:** Continue in the things you have learned, *because of their great value.* There is no wisdom greater than this in the world. Your wisdom about 20 other subjects means nothing if you are not **wise for salvation.**

i. This is something each generation must acquire for itself and then hold on to – the appreciation for the wisdom of the Bible, and a deliberate forsaking of any human wisdom that opposes or replaces what the Bible teaches.

ii. We don't think for a moment that mere Bible knowledge saves; there are those who know the words of the Bible well yet are not **wise for salvation.** Yet those words mixed with **faith** do make one wise for salvation.

3. (16-17) Timothy must continue with confidence in the Holy Scriptures.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may

be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

a. **All Scripture:** This indicates *more* than the Hebrew Scriptures. If Paul meant the exact same thing here as what Timothy learned as a child, he might have said "Those Scriptures" referring back to verse 15, or he might have just repeated the exact phrase, "**Holy Scriptures.**"

i. Paul changed his wording here because he recognized that what God uniquely brought forth from the apostles and prophets in his time was also **Scripture**; it was also the God-breathed word of God. This included what he and others knew was emerging as the written form of the *foundation of the apostles and prophets* mentioned in Eph 2:20.

ii. This would fulfill the promise Jesus made that the Holy Spirit would speak to the apostles and lead them into all truth.

iii. There is no doubt that Paul thought this way – knowing that God was bringing forth a New Testament through the apostles and prophets of the first century.

- Paul commanded the public congregational reading of his letters, *as would be done with the Hebrew Scriptures* (Col 4:16, 1Th 5:27).

- Paul called his own message *the word of God* (1Th 2:13).

- In 1Ti 5:18, Paul combined a quotation from the Old Testament, and some words of Jesus recorded in Luk 10:7 and he called *both* of them "Scripture."

iv. Paul wasn't the only one who thought this way. 2Pe 3:15 b-16 indicates the same idea, especially

when Peter included Paul's writings under the heading, *Scriptures*.

v. All this reminds us that even in Apostolic times, they were well aware that God was bringing forth more **Holy Scripture**, just as Jesus promised, just as Paul described, just as Peter understood.

b. **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God:** Paul exhorted Timothy, "Continue in these things *because the Bible comes from God and not man*. It is a God-inspired book, breathed out from God Himself."

i. This means something more than saying that God inspired the men who wrote it, though we believe that He did; God also inspired the very words they wrote. We notice it doesn't say, "All Scripture writers are inspired by God," even though that was true. Yet it doesn't go far enough. *The words they wrote were breathed by God.*

ii. It isn't that God breathed into the human authors. That is true, but not what Paul says here. He says that God breathed out of them His Holy Word.

iii. Some protest: "This statement doesn't mean anything because it is self-referential. Anyone could write a book and say that it is inspired by God." *Of course* it is self-referential. *Of course* the Bible says it is Holy Scripture. If it did not make that claim, critics would attack the lack of such a claim saying, "The Bible itself claims no inspiration."

iv. Yet the difference is that the Bible's claim to be Holy Scripture has been tested and proven through the centuries. Every generation gives rise to those who really believe they will put the last nails in the coffin that will bury the Bible – yet it never, never works. The Bible outlives and outworks and out-

influences all of its critics. It is an anvil that has worn out many, many hammers.

v. And to the critic who claims, "Anyone could write a book and say that it is inspired by God" we simply say, *please do*. Write your book, give it every claim of inspiration, and let's see how it compares to the Bible in any way you want to compare. We invite the smarter critics of the Bible to give us another Bible, something more inspired, something with more life-changing power. The great critic or professor or skeptic is surely smarter than a Galilean fisherman 2,000 years ago, having all the qualifications, all the culture, all the brainpower necessary. It should be easy for them to write something greater than the Bible.

vi. But of course this is impossible; there is no equal to the Bible and there never will be. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our Lord stands forever. What can compare to the Bible? What is the chaff to the wheat?

- There is no book like it in its *continuity and consistency*.
- There is no book like it in its honesty.
- There is no book like it in its circulation.
- There is no book like it in its survival.
- There is no book like it in its influence and life-changing power.

c. **By inspiration of God:** One may easily argue that the Bible is a *unique* book, but it does not prove that God inspired it. For greater evidence, one can look to the phenomenon of fulfilled prophecy.

i. Peter wrote about how we can know the Scriptures are really from God and he spoke about his own certainty because he saw Jesus miraculously transfigured before his own eyes and he heard a voice from heaven say, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. Yet, Peter said that we even have something *more* certain than a voice from heaven in knowing the Bible is from God: *We also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place* (2Pe 1:19).

ii. God's ability to precisely predict future events in the Bible is His own way of building proof for the Bible right into the text. It proves that it was authored by Someone who not only can see the future, but Who can also shape the future.

iii. For example, there are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled perfectly (such as His birth in Bethlehem, His emergence from Egypt, His healing of the sick, His death on the cross, and so forth). Collectively, the combination of this evidence together is absolutely overwhelming.

iv. Professor Peter Stoner has calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power); that many silver dollars would cover the state of Texas two feet deep. Stoner says that if you consider 48 of the prophecies, the odds become one in 10 to the 157th power.

d. **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God:** Remember that one may believe in the inspiration of the Bible in *principle*, but deny it in *practice*.

- We do this by imposing our own meaning on the text instead of letting it speak for itself.
- We do this by putting more of our self in the message than what God says.
- We do this by being more interested in our opinions when we preach than in explaining and proclaiming what God has said.
- We do this by lazy study and sloppy exposition.
- Instead, we honor God and His word by, as much as possible, simply letting the text explain and teach itself; to speak for itself.

i. "False doctrine cannot prevail long where the sacred Scriptures are read and studied. Error prevails only where the book of God is withheld from the people. The religion that fears the Bible is not the religion of God." (Clarke)

ii. In 2005 the *London Times* reported that a new "teaching document" issued by the Roman Catholic bishops of England, Wales and Scotland warns that Catholics should not take the Bible literally -- that it's not infallible. "We should not expect to find in Scripture full scientific accuracy or complete historical precision," they say in the booklet, *The Gift of Scripture*. So what sorts of things aren't accurate? Creation, for one. Genesis, they note, has two different, and sometimes conflicting, creation stories and cannot be considered "historical." Rather, the bishops say, it simply contains "historical traces."

e. **All Scripture:** This tells us *how much* of the Bible is inspired by God. The great Greek scholar Dean Alford understood this as meaning, "Every part of Scripture."

i. Some try to twist this – they try to make it say, "All Scripture that is inspired by God is profitable" and so

on. In doing this, they put themselves in the place of highest authority, because they then will tell us what is inspired and what isn't.

ii. They claim that the grammar is elastic enough in this statement to give the translation, "All Scripture *that is* inspired by God is profitable." But this is dishonest to the text, and ignores a critical word present both in the English translation and the ancient Greek: the word **and**.

iii. The position of **and** in the text makes it clear that Paul is asserting two truths about Scripture: that it is *both* God-breathed **and** profitable; *not* that only the God-breathed parts *are* profitable.

iv. So we believe it forever: it is **all** inspired, *and all* profitable. Since it comes from a perfect God, it is perfect and without error in the original autographs; and what we have before us are extraordinarily good copies of what was originally written.

v. The reliability of our copies of what was originally written is a matter which can be decided by science and research, and though some errors have been made in copying the Scriptures through the centuries, today we have a New Testament where not more than one-one thousandth of the text is in question – and not *one* significant doctrine is in question. The numbers for the Old Testament are even more impressive.

vi. There is something else we can say about the Bible: *It is true*. And though the Bible is *not* a science text-book, when it does speak on matters of science as science (not in figures of speech or poetic hyperbole), it is *true*.

f. **And is profitable:** Paul exhorted, "Timothy, continue in these things *because the Bible is profitable*, and profitable in many ways."

i. Profitable for **doctrine**: telling us what is true about God, man, the world we live in, and the world to come.

ii. Profitable for **reproof and correction**: with the authority to rebuke us and correct us. We are all under the authority of God's word, and when the Bible exposes our doctrine or our conduct as wrong, *we are wrong*.

iii. Profitable for **instruction in righteousness**: it tells us how to live in *true* righteousness. There is perhaps here a hint of grace, because Paul knew what true righteousness was instead of the legalistic false righteousness that he depended on before his conversion.

iv. This all means something else very simple: *We can understand the Bible*. If the Bible could not be understood, there would be nothing **profitable** about it.

v. It is **profitable** when we understand it *literally*. But when we take the Bible literally, we also understand that it means that we take it as true according to its literary context. When the Bible speaks as poetry, it will use figures of speech that may not be literally true. One example is when David said, *All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears* in Psa 6:6. Obviously, he spoke in poetic metaphor and he did not actually float his bed with tears. But when the Bible speaks as history, it *is* historically true, when it speaks in prophecy, it *is* prophetically true.

g. **That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work:** Paul exhorted, "Timothy, continue in these things *because the Bible makes you complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work.*"

i. **Complete** doesn't mean that the whole Christian life is about reading the Bible, or that the only important thing in good ministry is good Bible teaching.

ii. **Complete** means the Bible leads me into everything I need. If I will be both a hearer and a doer of the word, I will be **complete** as a Christian, **thoroughly equipped for every good work**. This reminds us that we are not in the business of building sermon appreciation societies, but in equipping the saints for the work of ministry.

iii. So, I don't ignore prayer, or worship, or evangelism, or good works to a needy world – *because the Bible itself tells me to do such things*. If I will be both a hearer and a doer of the word, I will be **complete**.

h. **That the man of God may be complete:** When we come to the Bible and let God speak to us, it changes us – it makes us **complete** and transforms us.

i. One way the Bible transforms us is through our understanding. Rom 12:2 says, *do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*. When we let the Bible guide our thinking, our minds are renewed and transformed, so we begin to actually think like God thinks.

ii. But there is another level by which the Bible transforms us: by a spiritual work, a spiritual blessing which God works in us as we come to the Bible and let Him speak to us. This is a spiritual work that goes beyond our intellectual understanding. With great spiritual power beyond our intellect:

- The Bible gives us eternal life (1Pe 1:23).
- The Bible spiritually cleanses us (Eph 5:26).
- The Bible gives us power against demonic spirits (Eph 6:17).
- The Bible brings spiritual power to heal our bodies (Mat 8:16).
- The Bible brings us spiritual strength (Psa 119:28).
- The Bible has the power to spiritually build faith in us (Rom 10:17).

iii. Because of this spiritual level on which the Word of God operates, we don't have to understand it all to have it be effectively working in our lives. Many people get discouraged because they feel they don't get much when they read the Bible on their own and so they give up. We must work to understand the Bible the best we can, and read it thoughtfully and carefully, but it benefits us *spiritually* even when we don't understand it all *intellectually*.

iv. A critic once wrote a letter to a magazine saying, "Over the years, I suppose I've gone to church more than 1,000 times, and I can't remember the specific content of even one sermon over those many years. What good was it to go to church 1,000 times?" The next week, someone wrote back: "Over the past many years, I have eaten more than 1,000 meals prepared by my wife. I cannot remember the specific menu of any of those meals. But they nourished me

along the way, and without them, I would be a much different man!" The Bible will do its spiritual work in us, if we will let it.

v. Paul began the chapter warning Timothy about dangerous times. Some Christians are swept away by these perilous times and some others go into hiding. Neither option is right for us. We are to stand strong and stay on the Word of God.

Preach the Word

2Ti 4:1 Then I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, He being about to judge living and dead at His appearance and His kingdom:

2Ti 4:2 preach the Word, be urgent in season, out of season, convict, warn, encourage with all long-suffering and teaching.

2Ti 4:3 For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own lusts, they will heap up to themselves teachers tickling the ear;

2Ti 4:4 and they will turn away the ear from the truth and will be turned aside to myths.

2Ti 4:5 But you be clear-minded in all, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fully carry out your ministry.

2Ti 4:6 For I am already being poured out, and the time of my release is here.

2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith.

2Ti 4:8 For the rest, the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me in that Day, and not only to me, but also to all the ones loving His appearance.

Personal Instructions

2Ti 4:9 Make haste to come to me shortly.

2Ti 4:10 For Demas deserted me, loving the present age, and he went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

2Ti 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Taking Mark, bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

2Ti 4:12 But I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

2Ti 4:13 When you come, bring the cloak which I left in Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.

2Ti 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith demonstrated many evil things to me. The Lord "will give back to him according to his works." LXX-Psa. 61:13; Prov. 24:12; MT-Psa. 62:12

2Ti 4:15 You also guard against him , for he greatly withstood our words.

2Ti 4:16 In my first defense no one was beside me, but all deserted me. May it not be reckoned to them.

2Ti 4:17 But the Lord stood with me and gave me power, that through me the preaching might be fulfilled, and all the nations might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

2Ti 4:18 And the Lord will deliver me from every wicked work and will save me for His heavenly kingdom; to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

2Ti 4:19 Greet Prisca and Aquila and the house of Onesiphorus.

2Ti 4:20 Erastus remained in Corinth, but I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.

2Ti 4:21 Try to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brothers.

2Ti 4:22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:1-22

2 Timothy 4 – Paul’s Final Testimony to Timothy

A. Paul’s final testimony to Timothy.

1. (1) *A solemn charge to Timothy.*

I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.

a. **I charge you therefore:** **Charge** translates a strong word from Biblical Greek (*diamarturomai*), also often translated *testified* (such as in Act 8:25). The idea is that Paul gave a solemn testimony to Timothy, testimony that Timothy must heed if he would be a godly pastor.

i. “The verb *diamartyromai* has legal connections and can mean ‘testify under oath’ in a court of law, or to ‘adjure’ a witness to do so.” (Stott)

b. **Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead:** Paul here described the members of the court where Paul gave his testimony, thereby making it more important.

i. As Paul sat in his cold, damp prison cell, he understood there was a spiritual reality present that went beyond the walls of his cell. Spiritually, through this letter, he gave solemn testimony to his young friend and associate and he did it in the presence of the God who will judge us all.

c. **At His appearing and His kingdom:** Paul still believed in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He had been in ministry for more than 30 years and his earliest letters (such as 1 and 2 Thessalonians) mentioned the return of Jesus. Now, so many years and experiences later, he still believed it with all his heart.

i. "The words 'shall judge' more literally are 'is about to be judging'; they point to the fact that Paul was living in the hope of the imminent return of Christ."
(Hiebert)

2. (2) *The testimony: **Preach the word!***

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

a. **Preach the word:** Paul's emphasis on the word of God has been constant. There are some 36 references to the true gospel in this letter and some 17 references to false teachings.

i. This constant emphasis makes Paul's point clear to Timothy:

- *Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord (2Ti 1:8).*
- *Hold fast the pattern of sound words (2Ti 1:13).*
- *The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men (2Ti 2:2).*
- *Rightly dividing the word of truth (2Ti 2:15).*
- *A servant of the Lord must be... able to teach (2Ti 2:24).*
- *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2Ti 3:16).*

b. **Preach the word:** As a pastor, Timothy was not required to merely *know* the word or *like* the word or *approve* of the word; he was required to **preach the word**. The word of God must be *preached* by Timothy; it was to be the content of his message.

i. Not everyone who opens a Bible and starts talking is preaching the word. Many well-intentioned preachers are actually preaching *themselves* instead of the word. If the *focus* is on the funny stories or the touching life experiences of the preacher, he may be preaching himself.

c. **Be ready in season and out of season:** This tells us *when* the pastor should be ready to preach the word. He should be ready *always*. He should preach it when it is easy and preach it when it is hard. He should preach it when the fruit is evident and preach it when the fruit seems invisible. He should just preach it.

i. There was once a Church of England clergyman who was gloriously saved. When Jesus changed his life he started preaching the gospel to his whole parish and they all got saved. Then he started preaching in neighboring parishes, and the clergymen of those parishes were offended. They asked the bishop to make the man stop. When the bishop confronted him he said, "I hear you are always preaching and you don't seem to be doing anything else." The changed man answered, "Well bishop, I only preach during two seasons of the year." The bishop said, "I'm glad to know that; what seasons are they?" He replied, "In season and out of season!"

d. **Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching:** In his preaching Timothy was to bring the Word of God to bear on the lives of his people. He was not to treat the word as if it were filled with interesting ideas or fascinating theories. He was to hold up the Word of God against the lives of his people and let God do His work.

3. (3-4) *The need for the true preaching of the word.*

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because they have itching ears*, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

a. **They will not endure sound doctrine:** Timothy needed to keep focused on the Word of God because man, by his natural instinct, does not *want* God's revelation. He would rather hear what he wants to hear – something to scratch his **itching ears**.

i. Clarke on **itching ears**: "Endless curiosity, an insatiable desire of *variety*; and they get their ears tickled with the *language* and *accent* of the person, abandoning the *good* and *faithful preacher* for the *fine speaker*."

ii. This also shows that if we *do* want to hear God's word, God is doing something wonderful in us. Left to ourselves, we would rather do it our way, but God changes our heart in wonderful ways, giving us a desire for His word.

b. **They will heap up for themselves teachers:** This reminds us that the most popular teachers are not necessarily the most faithful teachers. We shouldn't assume a teacher is scratching itching ears just because he is popular, but neither should we assume that he is faithful to God's Word just because he is popular.

c. **And be turned aside to fables:** Once people leave the Word of God they often then embrace fantastic fantasies. When a man rejects God's truth, it isn't that he believes in nothing; he will believe in *anything*.

i. To believe that the universe came about by chance is to believe a fable. This description of the evolution

of the universe in a *Los Angeles Times* article is an example of one of these **fables**:

In the beginning, there was light – but also quarks and electrons. The Big Bang spewed out energy that condensed into radiation and particles. The quarks joined into protons and careened wildly about in a hot, dense, glowing goop as opaque as a star.

Time (300,000 years or so) passed. Space expanded. Matter cooled. The electrons and protons, electrically irresistible to each other, merged into neutral hydrogen, and from this marriage, the first atoms were born. Space between atoms became as transparent as crystal – pretty much the way it looks today.

The rest, as they say, is history. Atoms merged to form dust clouds, which grew into stars and galaxies and clusters. Stars used up their nuclear fuel, collapsed and exploded in recurring cycles, fusing elements in the process.

Occasionally, a stable planet condensed around a second-generations star, where carbon-based life forms grew into, among other things, cosmologists, the better to contemplate it all. (From a sidebar to a science article in the *Los Angeles Times*, titled “The Big Bang and What Followed It”)

ii. It is possible for many churchgoers to turn aside from the truth and to believe many fables:

- The fable that you must *earn* your way before God.
- The fable that God only loves you when you are good.
- The fable that you should walk around thinking of yourself as better than others because you are a Christian.

4. (5) *The testimony restated: **Fulfill your ministry.***

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

a. **But you:** This is a word of contrast against the people mentioned in the previous sentence. Though others turned aside to fables, Timothy was to be even more dedicated to doing what God wanted him to do. Their presence was to make him more dedicated, not more discouraged.

i. "The more determined men become to despise the teachings of Christ, the more zealous should godly ministers be to assert it and the more strenuous their efforts to preserve it entire." (Calvin)

b. **Be watchful in all things:** Timothy could not fulfill his ministry unless he kept careful attention, being **watchful in all things**. Every good shepherd has his eyes open.

c. **Endure afflictions:** Ministry is just like life – there are **afflictions** to be borne with. For some this is a disturbing thought because they thought that the ministry would be one beautiful spiritual experience after another. There are plenty of wonderful blessings in serving God but there are also **afflictions** to be endured.

d. **Do the work of an evangelist:** This implies that Timothy was not particularly gifted as an evangelist but he still had to faithfully do that **work** as a preacher of God's Word.

e. **Fulfill your ministry:** Paul gave a similar command to Archippus (Col 4:17), and he knew what it was to fulfill his own ministry in some sense (Act 12:25).

i. There may be many reasons why someone's ministry goes unfulfilled and each must be earnestly

battled:

- Fear.
- Unbelief.
- The cares of the world.
- The fear of man.
- Criticism and discouragement.
- Besetting sin.

B. The final words from Paul: his triumphant confidence.

1. (6-7) Paul's triumphant confidence.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

a. **I am already being poured out as a drink offering:** A drink offering brought wine before the Lord and poured it out at His altar. It was a way to give wine to God as a sacrifice, just as an animal might be given as a sacrifice.

i. The idea of a **drink offering** is first presented in Gen 35:14, where Jacob poured out a drink offering before the Lord as a sacrifice. In the Mosaic Law, drink offerings could be a part of sacrifice to the Lord (Exo 29:40-41 and Lev 23:13).

ii. There was also a Roman idea here. Every Roman meal ended with a small sacrificial ritual to the gods – a cup of wine was taken and poured out before the gods. In this sense Paul said “The day is done, the meal is just about over, and I’m being poured out unto God.”

iii. **Poured out** has the idea of a *complete* giving, with no reservation. The liquid is completely emptied from the cup, and totally given to God.

iv. So Paul was **already being poured out**. His head was not on the executioner's block yet, but his heart was there. He was *ready* to make the ultimate sacrifice. "He considers himself as on the eve of being sacrificed, and looks upon his blood as the libation which was poured on the sacrificial offering. He could not have spoken thus positively had not the sentence of death been already passed upon him." (Clarke)

b. **The time of my departure is at hand**: Paul felt that he was in the airport and his flight to heaven was ready to depart. He waited for his boarding call.

i. Paul's exhortation to Timothy is therefore even more meaningful because he knew he was passing from the scene and Timothy must carry the torch. God's workmen pass on, but God's work continues.

c. **I have finished the race**: Throughout his ministry Paul used the picture of the race and the Christian being an athlete running that race (Php 3:12-14, Act 20:24, 1Co 9:24, Heb 12:1). Now he knew his race was just about **finished**.

3. (8) *Paul's crown of righteousness.*

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

a. **There is laid up for me**: Paul knew there was a crown waiting for him in heaven, and he was ready to receive it. He was certain of it.

i. There are two main words for **crown** in the New Testament. One refers to a royal crown and the other

to the victor's crown (the *stephanos*). Here Paul referred to the victor's crown – the crown that was essentially a trophy, recognizing that one had competed according to the rules and had won the victory.

ii. Before Paul was a Christian he supervised the execution of the first martyr and then began to kill as many other Christians as he could. But now at the end of his life he was ready to receive a crown – a *stephanos*. It is likely that he remembered the name of the first martyr, who died at Paul's own hands: *Stephanos* (Stephen).

iii. In that day winners in the world of sports received a crown of olive or ivy leaves that soon withered and died. But the crown for God's people lasts forever (1Co 9:25, 1Pe 5:4).

iv. We are promised the *crown of life* if we will endure temptation (Jas 1:12).

v. Some people wonder if we will walk around heaven with crowns on, and everyone will notice who has the bigger and better crowns. But in Rev 4:10, the elders surrounding the throne of God take their crowns and cast them before Jesus – giving any trophy they have received right back to Jesus.

b. Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day: Paul envisioned an awards ceremony where he would receive the crown that waited for him. Paul was about to be condemned and executed by an earthly court, but he was also going to be rewarded by a heavenly Lord.

i. "This is most probably the last letter the apostle ever wrote and it is impossible to see him in a more advantageous point of view than he now appears,

standing on the verge of eternity, full of God, and strongly anticipating an eternity of glory.” (Clarke)

ii. Some feel that Paul was too focused on rewards and that it isn’t proper for Christians to think much about the reward they will receive in heaven. Yet God has no problem motivating us with heavenly reward. It *will* be worth it. We *must* hang in there now. We *will* be rewarded.

iii. Some Christians worry unnecessarily about their crown:

- What if I don’t get a crown?
- What if my crown is really small?
- What if the Lord is disappointed in me?

iv. We should ignore all these speculations and simply be busy serving and glorifying God and our crown will take care of itself.

c. **Also to all who have loved His appearing:** This promise is for us – *if* we will set our focus on heaven and on the Jesus who both walked the earth and now reigns in heaven, who is waiting to receive us.

C. Paul’s last words from prison.

1. (9-13) The solitude of the great apostle.

Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

a. **Be diligent to come to me quickly:** Paul was a man of God but he was not superhuman. He needed and wanted companionship. Paul was lonely.

b. **For Demas has forsaken me:** Paul remembers those who have forsaken him. Some (like **Demas**) left him because they had **loved this present world** (literally, “the now age”). Others left him out of necessity (like **Crescens** and **Titus**). Some other left because Paul sent them (like **Tychicus**).

i. Demas was mentioned in Paul’s earlier letters as a fellow worker but later he went astray (Col 4:14 and Phm 1:24). His previous faithfulness made it all more painful for Paul.

c. **Only Luke is with me:** Luke, who had traveled with Paul on many of his missionary journeys, remained with Paul. Everyone else was gone. This was a significant contrast to Paul’s first Roman imprisonment ten years before, where he received many visitors (Act 28:30-31).

d. **Get Mark and bring him with you:** This is evidence of a restoration of trust in Mark from Paul. Paul had wanted nothing to do with him in Act 15:36-40.

e. **Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas:** This tells us that it is likely that Paul was arrested at Troas, resulting in this second imprisonment at Rome. In those days the arresting soldiers had claim to any extra garments in the possession of the one arrested. It may be that Paul was forewarned of the arrest and therefore committed his few books and this **cloak** – an outer garment – to the care of an honest man named **Carpus**.

i. The **cloak** was “A circular cape which fell down below the knees, with an opening for the head in the centre.” (White)

ii. This cloak left in Troas shows us:

- Paul gave up everything to serve Jesus (all he had at the end of his life was a cloak and a few books).
- Paul was almost completely forsaken by his friends (he apparently had no friends to lend or obtain a cloak for him in Rome).
- Paul had a very independent mind (he would not beg for a cloak).
- Paul did not care much for how he was dressed (he could have asked for more or for different articles of clothing).
- Paul was an ordinary man with ordinary needs.

iii. "Oh, what a small deal of household stuff had this great apostle, saith Erasmus; a cloak to keep off the rain, and a few books and writings." (Trapp)

f. **And the books, especially the parchments:** Paul stayed a scholar to the end and wanted his books. He especially wanted the **parchments**, which were portions of the Old Testament.

i. "Still more does this passage refute the madness of the fanatics who despise books and condemn all reading and boast only of . . . their private inspirations by God. But we should note that this passage commends continual reading to all godly men as a thing from which they can profit." (Calvin)

3. (14-15) *A warning to beware of Alexander the coppersmith.*

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

a. **Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm:**
In 1Ti 1:20 Paul mentioned *Alexander* as someone who

whose faith had suffered shipwreck. Now Paul warned Timothy about this same man. Paul simply wrote that Alexander **did me much harm** – but that he would also oppose Timothy (**You also must beware of him**).

i. It would have been wrong of Timothy to respond to this by saying to Paul, “Paul, Alexander has always been nice to me. He has his faults, but don’t we all?” Instead, we can be sure that Timothy respected Paul’s judgment – and took his counsel to **beware of** Alexander.

ii. **Coppersmith** “Does not mean that he worked only in copper. The term came to be used of workers in any kind of metal.” (White)

b. **Did me much harm**: The implication of this phrase is that he “informed many things against me.” Perhaps Alexander was a traitor, an informer who betrayed Paul to the Roman government and was responsible for his current imprisonment. Perhaps the thought of **he has greatly resisted our words** meant that Alexander was a witness against Paul at his first defense.

i. “Informers were one of the great curses of Rome at this time. And it may well be that Alexander was a renegade Christian, who went to the magistrates with false information against Paul, seeking to ruin him in the most dishonourable way.” (Barclay)

ii. “They were accused to ‘atheism,’ (because they eschewed idolatry and emperor-worship), of cannibalism (because they spoke of eating Christ’s body), and even of a general ‘hatred of the human race’ (because of their supposed disloyalty to Caesar and perhaps because they had renounced the popular pleasures of sin). It may be that some of these charges were being leveled against Paul.” (Stott)

c. **May the Lord repay him according to his works:** Alexander's judgment would be simple. It is a terrible thing to be judged according to one's **works**.

i. "This is neither a curse nor a railing speech, saith an ancient, but a prediction well beseeeming an apostle, that avenged not himself, but rather gave place to wrath, Rom 12:19." (Trapp)

4. (16-18) *God's faithfulness to Paul at his first defense.*

At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

a. **No one stood with me... But the Lord stood with me:** Paul was all alone, but Jesus stood by him and Paul served God faithfully during his first defense.

i. The words "**May it not be charged against them**" show that Paul was not bitter that **all forsook** him. This is powerful evidence of a great work of grace and spiritual maturity.

ii. Paul's **first defense** may have been his first imprisonment in Rome (spoken of at the end of Acts), or it could have been a first hearing under his current imprisonment.

b. **And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion:** God had delivered Paul before so he had no doubt about God's power or goodness. Paul just didn't know if this time his fate would end with be **delivered out of the**

mouth of the lion or being preserved **for His heavenly kingdom**.

c. **To Him be glory forever and ever**: This reflects an unreasonable optimism and joy. Paul faced his last moments of this life and he was, but many accounts, penniless, friendless, without valuable possessions, cold, without adequate clothing, and destined for a soon death. Yet, especially knowing the heavenly reward waiting for him, he would not trade his place with anyone.

5. (19-21) *Paul's closing greetings to his friends in contact with Timothy, and from Roman Christians.*

Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick. Do your utmost to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

a. **Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus**: In his parting words, Paul's heart was for the people he knew. He thought about others and not himself. Paul knew the nature of Jesus and was an others-centered person just as Jesus was.

b. **Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick**: Paul was a man used by God to perform remarkable miracles of healing (such as in Act 14:8-10; Act 19:11-20), yet he left Trophimus **sick**. This shows that even the Apostle Paul did not have miraculous healing powers to use at his own will. He could only give a gift of healing if God it was God's will and timing.

i. Charles Spurgeon preached a whole sermon on the words **but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick** (*The Sick Man Left Behind*). The points were:

- It is the will of God that some good men should be in ill health.
- Good men may be laid aside when they seem to be most needed.
- Good men would have the Lord's work go on whatever becomes of them.

ii. "It is possible that Erastus and Trophimus were with St. Paul when he was arrested the second time, and that they remained in his company as far as Miletus and Corinth respectively." (White)

c. **Do your utmost to come before winter:** This has much heart and emotion behind it. As an old man, Paul dearly wanted to see his young associate before he laid down his life for his Lord. We don't know if Paul ever saw Timothy again, but we can be sure Timothy did his **utmost to come before winter.**

i. Paul's imprisonment in the Mamertine prison (a bleak building still standing in Rome, built 100 years before Paul's imprisonment for political enemies of Rome) lasted until he was beheaded under Nero outside Rome's Ostian Gate at a place called "Three Fountains."

ii. An absurd legend was eventually spun that said that when Paul was beheaded, his severed head bounced three times and at each place it hit the ground a fountain sprung up – one hot, one warm, and the third cold – thus the place was called "Three Fountains."

iii. Paul was martyred in the aftermath of the great fires that swept Rome in A.D. 64 – which Nero, in some manner, tried to blame on Christians. According to some traditions, he was beheaded on the same day

Peter was crucified upside-down. Paul was a Roman citizen and could not be legally crucified.

6. (22) *The last words from the pen of Paul.*

The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

a. **The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you.** The last words of Paul reflect a man who simply loved Jesus and had received His grace. This simplicity, and all the power that went with it, marked the entire ministry of Paul.

i. "Here a very close personal association between the Lord and Timothy is prayed for." (White)

b. **Amen:** Paul invited Timothy to affirm all this by an agreeing "**Amen.**" Paul had fulfilled his ministry and was ready to receive his reward, and he wanted Timothy to do the same.